

# TREKisM at LENGTH

5

**Editor: Contributing Editor:** 

Vel Jaeger Kim Knapp



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for coming through on a moment's notice with "just one more illo" again... and again...

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for researching appropriate quotes for the section headings... and completing the gorgeous calligraphy while battling the flu

## Lee Ellen Heller

for lending her learned eye (ear?) to our poetry selections in the midst of her graduate studies

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them!

## Gene Roddenberry

for creating our World of Star Trek

## **Harve Bennett**

for taking us along on new voyages

Here's to Star Trek IV!

**SHALOM** 

PAX

**PEACE** 

to us all in 1986

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## **Editorial Ramblings**

Since I've left so many contorted limbs in the wake of soliciting biographical data about our talented contributors, I suppose it's only fair play to take my turn on stage. Mundane data: born in Canada 38 years ago, raised in Florida (Tampa Bay area); BA in German from University of South Florida; married to a career Marine (Charles); children = Charles (14), Gordon (12), and Ruth (9); jobs held include substitute high school teacher (South Carolina), printer (Florida), insurance agency secretary (California); back to school at Mira Costa College here in Oceanside; currently in fannish heaven working for a printer (I can't believe I'm actually getting paid for having so much fun playing with photocopiers — I even have my own graphics table!); when not editing zines can be found digging in a flower garden or seated at a sewing machine in daylight hours, and filling the dining room table with art supplies at night; founded the Trek SIG for Mensa in 1977, continued as Newsletter Editor when Kim Knapp took over as Coordinator in 1984; began contributing (mostly art, some stories and poetry) around the same time — contributor's copy #100 will be arriving in a few months.

A subject of controversy from issue #1 of TREKISM is whether or not to indicate which contributors are members of Mensa — in fairness to all, I've decided to drop the distinctions entirely. If it is absolutely essential for your enjoyment of this zine that the members or non-members be identified, send me a SASE and I'll be glad to give you the information. Personally, all I care about is finding a good story, and sharing it with other STAR TREK fans — period.

SAD FAREWELLS 1985 has been a costly year for fandom, for we have lost some of our brightest stars. M.L. "Steve" Barnes, creator of "A Handfull of Snowflakes" and many other fan fiction classics, took her own life — if only she had known how much her work was cherished. Cheryl Gladen, an active fan in many circles, including TREKisM, died suddenly and tragically of an illness, leaving behind two small children and many friends who shared in her generosity. Toni Cardinal-Price, prolific and multi-talented writer and kind supporter of reofen — including this editor — killed in a senseless traffic accident. We mourn their deaths, and share the loss with their families; we are the poorer for their passing.

FAMOUS LAST WORDS—I hope no one has wasted too many tears over this being the last TaL, 'cause t'aint — no sooner did I say, "There won't be any more TaL's because we're just not getting enough submissions," than did the mailman back up his truck to my doorstep and begin shoveling manuscripts. TaL VI is filled, edited, and mostly at the typist's (our newest volunteer, Kind Lady Isabel Klein). That zine will be racing to press on the heels of TaL V because both editors are moving —— I'll be heading home to Florida (we're saying good-bye to the Marine Corps after 21 years) in late February or early March, and Kim's Navy corpsman husband is heading north to Washinton state soon after. We'll be field-testing our theories of how to run a SIG from opposite ends of the Continent —— and racing to see who can find the best bargains in printing.

In IDIC,

Vel Jaeger

## **Coordinator's Contributions**

This started out to be my "author's bio," but I couldn't think of anything about my life that anyone would want to know. I don't remember watching STAR TREK when it first aired (I was ten), but my mother tells me I liked it, and my fascination with science fiction really began that year, so —

Just coping with life kept me busy for the next 16 years. I was always on the lookout, however,

for the sort of conventions that Isaac Asimov spoke about in his introductions. And I held the required miscellaneous jobs that SF writers seem to get: baker shop, doctor's office, department store credit, fast food, gas station -- even Kelly Girls. I also found time to get married and have a baby (he'll be seven in January -- egad!). New Voyages sitting in a used bookstore in Seattle found fandom for me. It took six months to track it down, though - since almost all the addresses are sadly outdated. But find it I did. My parents think I'm looney tunes. My in-laws think I'm looney tunes and leave me alone (fringe benefits, eh?). My husband builds Enterprise models, 'cause he's sure i'd screw them up. Our printer thinks we're looney tunes -- but never complains about our cash.

TRIALS & TRIBULATIONS Let me tell you ... They say disasters strike in threes. I'll swear to it. Within 30 days: (1) My home was burgled [35mm camera, new telephone, and a trash can -gone forever] (2) My car's transmission had a nervous breakdown [the bill's paid, but the transmission still hasn't recovered] (3) While driving Ye Senior Editor's newly-painted car, some surfertype pulled a U-turn directly in front of me. Says he didn't see a thing till I hit him (how he could miss a sunshine-yellow Pacer wagon, I don't know -- ). But the end is in sight. At the end of January I renounce "grass-widow" status (ie, my spouse returns from six months in Okinawa) and in March/April we're off to never-neverland (three years shore duty in Bremerton, WA). This thing will be in print and -- wait a minute. A new idea for another zine? About-- called what? (watch this space for a continuing nervous twitch).

Kim Knapp

## **About the Contributors**

DENISE SZAFRAN CHONKA: "I'm 29 years old, and have been a Mensan since 1981. I am currently taking physics and calculus part-time, working towards a BS in physics (although I have changed my mind so many times even this may pass). I am an amateur calligrapher, photographer, and costumer. My husband Dan and I have been married since October 1984, and were blessed with our first child July 31, 1985 (that's 9½ months, everyone -- our own little "honeymoon baby"). She's TREKISM's newest member, Jamie Amanda Chonka. I met my co-author for "Garden," Donna Frost, at SPACE TREK II in St. Louis in 1983. Imagine, going all that way to find a fan who lived only seven miles from me! We became fast friends, and besides standing up in my wedding, she's Jamie's godmother. I am now a full-time homemaker. I have had only two other things published -- a ni var poem entitled "Spock/Leonard/Vincent" in RENAIS-SANCE (May/June 1983), and a co-authored story (again with Donna) in MIND MELD II. I am also a member of Intertel, if anyone cares (I know, I know, I'm just a joiner by nature)."

PATRICIA "PATT" DEMETRI: is a registered nurse working in a major trauma center. She loves to read, write and fish; enjoys conventions and home video, rock music and Roger Whitaker. Divorced, she has an 18-year old son, and lives in a mobile home with a dog who weighs twenty pounds -- "including thirty pounds of teeth. He bites everybody except me."

ROSEMARIE EIERMAN: "Days are never long enough with one father, two jobs and at least twelve hobbies competing for attention. The hobbies beside Star Trek include reading, writing, needlework, PBS-watching, LNFC, corresponding with friends, attending concerts, plays and SF conventions, coaxing house plants, taming a computer, and dragon-sitting. Job #1 is in the accounting department of a Milwaukee insurance company; #2 job is being the accounting department and GOH managing department of Triangulum, which runs an SF convention. Occasionally there is time for writing short autobiographies on even shorter notice."

DONNA FROST: "I'm 28, married; my husband's name is Gary -- we have a 5½ year old girl, Amanda. My current role is housewife and Mom. My major in college was psychology. I've been a fan of Trek since the 60's and am an avid fan of Bill Shatner. Denice Chonka and I founded a Star Trek club, "The USS Intrepid" when we both lived in Buffalo. My other interests besides Trek include horsebackriding, reading, and crafts."

DEBBIE GILBERT: "I've been in Star Trek fandom for ten years, and in Mensa for seven, but I've been a writer forever! Since selling my first article at age 17, I've published nonfiction and poetry in a variety of national markets, including DOG WORLD, GOOD HOUSEKEEPING, and LAKIES' HOME JOURNAL. My fan writing has appeared in many zines, among them VISIONS 1 and 2, GUARDIAN 6, KOBAYASHI MARU, PARALLAX RING, MIND MELD 1 and 2, ETERNAL TRIANGLE 3, and of course, TAL III. My current fannish activity centers around the local club, Allies for Star Trek, for which I edit the bi-monthly newszine, COMMUNI-CATIONS CONSOLE. I hold a BA in psychology, and am now working as a grad assistant while earning my MS in counseling. I also founded and am leader of a support group for women with eating disorders. Among my interests are dogs, hiking, biking, nature study, vegetarianism, reading, music (classical, jazz, film soundtracks), and taping "The Prairie Home Companion" radio show every Saturday night. Other Mensa SIGs I belong to are Nature and Writers. My ambition is to achieve immortality through my writing.

JON B. GREEN: 32, a Computer Programmer/quasi Engineer, started reading SF at the age of ten (Have Spacesuit/Will Travel, by Heinlein): what a great book for a kid growing up during the Race to the Moon!) Although he became an instant Trek fan during the premier episode of the show (THE MAN TRAP — featuring a distant descendant — Crewman Green), he did not actively become involved in fandom until the mid-70's when he discovered Cons in Houston (which was shortly after he started reading TREKISM). Now most of his non-mundane (ie, anything outside of 8:30 to 5:30, M-F) activities center around SF: reading, writing, TV, movies, vacations (cons!), art, electronics ... Now if there was only an SF cookbook ... "

LEE HELLER: "was born. Later, she discovered books, dogs, sex, food, Star Trek, and graduate school (not necessarily in that order). A self-professed aspiring Yuppie, she belongs to a health club, shops at Bloomingdale's, and has her own American Express card — it's a part of lots of interesting lives. Her doctoral dissertation will explore family perversions in nineteenth century fiction (she hates poetry) and should be completed sometime before the End of Civilization As We Know It."

KAREN HUNTER: says that her age is "old enough to know better," and that she went to school when she learned more than was in the curriculum. She considers her life too busy because she tries to do too much and is interested in nearly everything. Her idea of heaven is a large library filled with books, a fireplace, and Spock to play (chess) with. Karen is back in school now, working as a graduate assistant.

ISABEL KLEIN: is a first generation Star Trek fan, a life-long Chicago Cubs fan, and an itinerant word processer. She shares her home with two lovely felines -- Ms. Muffin and the Lady Nutmeg. Her first Trek story was WHERE ARE THE CLOWNS?, seen here in Tal V -- and we'll have more from her prolific imagination in Tal VI.

SUZAN LOVETT: "was born October 9, 1948 in Ankara, Turkey, to two very Turkish parents." Schools: the usual stuff first, then American College for Girls in Istanbul (thats the American run/staffed college that's more widely known as Robert College). majoring in psychology - which she hated with a pasion. Then came two years of Conservatory of Arts -- not the artist's section, but drama. Then a string of jobs in Turkey, one short marriage of a year which ended in divorce. She was married in 1973 to an officer in the USAF (he's a captain now); they have a daughter, Crystal, born in 1976. She has traveled all over the world, mostly at the beck and call of Uncle Sam, somewhat at leisure. Suzi has been a Trek fan since it first hit Turkey in 1972, to the tune of 12 episodes. The way the Air Force kept shifting them around, she didn't find fandom until 1979, and started getting active in 1980.

STEPHEN MENDENHALL: 28, has spent a number of years on trips to the Middle East with his father on research. He became hooked on ST when MENAGERIE was first shown — at his bedtime. Stephen's first convention experience took place in 1973. meeting D.C. Fontana but being too shy to speak to her.

MIKKI REYNARD: Certificate in Piano Technology (tuning and repairing), BA in Dramatics and German,
MA in Hungarian and East European Area Studies, PhD candidate in Uralic and General Linquistics,
Certificate in Small Electrical Appliance Repair, AAS in Electronics (supposedly to be practical for
a change and earn a decent living); now looking forward without enthusiam to a seemingly assured future
as a bag lady. Mikki became a Born-again Trekkie after viewing STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE a
second time, and began writing about Star Trek characters. Her special interests are Consciousness
Science, particularly the Gurdjieffian viewpoint; and the philosophy and physiology of non-emotion,
with possible applicability to Human behavior.

LAUREL RIDENER: "I'm 37, married 18 years, two kids (3 and 13 years old), work full-time on the grave-yard shift. We raise Appaloosa horses on our micro-ranch named Sanctuary. If I have one aspiration in life, it's to one day write a professional Star Trek novel with Lynn Syck. I have been a Trekker since Day One but didn't become actively involved in fandom 'till Lynn and I began collaborating. I'm an extremely shy person but through Star Trek in general and Lynn in particular, I've found friends all over the country. Since I can't be alive when the Enterprise soars, I'm proud to be a part of the era that dreamed, struggled and then created her ancestors, a part of that 'first step.' I have a tremendous faith in mankind and firmly believe we will survive these "terrible twos" and live to see starships like our beautiful Enterprise, captains like our heroic Kirk, and yes, even Vulcans like our ever-logical Mr. Spock."

EMILY ROSS: describes herself as having dark blonde hair, blue eyes, big glasses, 5'5" and a size 12. Having been a physics and math major in college and an ex-Air Force officer, she is currently an unemployed computer programmer, married, with a teenaged son. Emily considers herself a pretty fair bowler and a fanatical bridge player; she's a member of the L-5 society, the Planetary Society, Allies for Star Trek, and the William Shatner Fellowship.

LYNN SYCK: "I have been married for 22 eyars to a man who is wonderful in every way except he doesn't like Star Trek (I never said he was perfect). We have three sons, a lovely daughter-in-law, and an adorable grandson (prejudiced? Me? Never!) My involvement with Star Trek began about four years ago and through my writing I have found such great joy in the form of friends all over the country and most particularly my co-author, Laurel Ridener. It's a beautiful time to be alive and to be part of the hopeful future that is the promise of Star Trek."

V.L (Ginny) THORN: "born in Kansas but located almost anywhere else since my first birthday, I consider myself a totally committed Midwesterner. After spending a few years on the east coast I was more than glad to return to a change of seasons, that midwestern drawl, an oh yes, all that corn. Having studied music at the University of Dubuque, lowa, I really didn't have much encouragement to write, and my teachers were most upset with me when I left school to get married. (And to a sailor, at that!) Nevertheless, two kids and lots of years later I discovered Star Trek and all of its fanzines and gothic romances and poetry and cons .... TREKISM was my first real contanct with the world of Star Trek, and I have Vel to thank for whipping — er — molding me into shape. A most cooperating and encouraging critic one could never have asked for, she wouldn't accept a poor line when a better one would do — and I tried to be accomodating. Star Trek editors tread a thin line, and most of them get less praise than they deserve. And most of them are not the artist that Vel Jaeger is either."

BARBARA WALKER: 56, qualifies her age as being "geriatric in years, but 'Peter Pan in interests and enerby." By profession she is an artist, specializing in wildlife, animal portraits, logos, and designs for anything dealing with animals. She has a husband and son in construction, another son studying to be a teacher, and a daughter who is a computor programmer. Barbara discovered fandom after becoming disenchanted withthe caliber of the "pro" ST novels, and entered a whole new world. "I enjoy Trek, Uncle, Galactica; am an avid sci-fi (sorry, Harlan) and fantasy reader, as well as history, biography, and some mysteries, but am very 'picky' when it comes to authors and writing styles and content. I love country living, get bored rapidly with the city and am never lonely; am a dedicated vegetarian (macrobiotic) for health reasons rather than squeamishness about using animals for food — after all, plants are also alive."

ALLIE WERHAN: "I am old enough to have two grown children, both of them Star Trek fans, so I must have raised them right. I have been a fan of ST since it started, and I can recall one time in the fall of 1966 when my (now ex) husband and I had a big fight because he flushed the toilet in the master bath when I was watching ST in the bedroom and he drowned out part of the dialog. (That isn't why we were divorced.) I have a degree in history, am a licensed pilot and work in retail management. My other favorite sci-fi is Mad Max et al. Ebbadeeya, that's all folks, as Porky Pig would say!

BARBARA J. YANOSKO: is a teacher of quantitative methods in business at Humboldt State University. She is also mother to a teenage boy (understudy to Vulcan) and a 12-year-old Earther girl (but she can raise either or both brows), and a closet Trekker and bridge player.



## **DATA ENTRIES**

GREETINGS AND FELICITATIONS.
HIP HIP HURBAH! TALLY HO!

AUTOMATIC ALL POINTS BELAY FROM STAR FLEET COINMAND ... CODE ONE!

A SUBSPACE MESSAGE WILL TAKE THREE WEEKS TO BEACH STAB FLEET.

YOU DON'T DEED ALL THAT SUBSPACE CHATTER.

## Frost on the Typewriter

by V.L. Thorn

Writing! Who needs it! I glance into the bathroom mirror as I whisk the sponge around sink, counter and stool in the wake of one untidy husband addicted to the hair dryer and two equally untidy offspring who have left a pattern of powder, hair spray and deodorant from shower to sink to towel racks. A pale face containing two light brown eyes embellished with smeared mascara and topped by an unruly, hastily combed shock of dark hair stares back at me with resignation. The morning ritual causes me to check the clock — as though the clean-up marathon has been shaved by minutes or seconds this morning. But it reads eight a.m. as usual, and I shrug out of bathrobe to do my own routine.

A short time later, damp but antiseptic, I head for the basement with an armload of discarded, slightly soiled wearing apparel gathered from various corners around the house. The washing machine sits in silent rebuke until I switch it into a mildly protesting agitation of froth-swathed potpourri, and I retreat to the silence of my unplugged coffee pot.

The second cup never tastes as good as the first, I note absently, and begin to clear away scattered remnants of toast, eggs, cereal, and pie... pie? I recall the lonely piece sitting overnight in the oven, stashed away in the hopes that I could share it with a second cup of coffee next morning. The spies had outwitted me again!

The family room gets a cursory inspection to make sure all the pillows are back on the couch, and shoes are not malingering beneath coffee table or TV. Still, I hesitate and predictably make another trip into the kitchen to drain coffee pot dregs into my stained cup. The morning paper lies in dismembered state on one of the kitchen chairs, dropped in haste as one of the members of my family realized the lateness of the hour, and I pick it up idly to carry it into the master bedroom.

The bedroom is a lovely place to finish coffee, read the paper, and stare out the window in wistful contemplation of servants to complete the rest of the household duties and bring me my requested whatevers. An eager woodpecker attacking our hallowed oak tree shocks me back to reality. Husband has spent a small fortune on the tree, dusts for bugs, sprays for blights, and fertilizer to make it grow. And I move with indignant exasperation to lift the window and mouth an angry "Shoo!" at the indifferent bird. It looks at me with indulgent consideration before flying leisurely to the neighbors' front yard where it attacks the front corner of their house with relish.

The mood has been broken, and I throw the bed together, put away husband's abandoned suit and tie from the previous day, locking his alternate dress shoes onto their closet spikes of honor to air and reform. A glance into the dresser mirror confirms the fact that I have not yet turned into a princess, and I sit down with dubious enthusiasm to apply lipstick, fresh mascara, and a modicum of flowery smelling toilet water. It wouldn't do to greet the UPS man with that unkempt, just awakened look, I reason to myself, and grab the hairbrush with renewed vigor.

Moments later, prepared to face the world, I open the curtains a trifle more to let in the misted light of a foggy morning, and give the room one last look. The washing machine is making bumping sounds in the basement, so my next mission is to untangle long sleeves from bra straps and innocent jockey shorts, and add one dropped sock to the final cycle. The washer sighs gratefully into its series of rinses and spins, and I trudge back up the stairs to finish cold toast and contemplate the pushbuttons of the dishwasher. Listening for the dying spurts of water feeding into the washer in the basement, I time my approach to activate the surging surf in my favorite kitchen appliance. And with a rattling shudder, it settles down to its task.

I have been purposely avoiding one of the rooms in the house, the one overlooking the back yard bird bath near the small pines and a gracefully lonely birch clump. Originally, it was the bedroom of oldest daughter who has since moved to pursue men, a career, and men, in that order. Since it was

the smallest room in the house, I grabbed it for my own before anyone else could put in a claim, and planted my books, stereo, and portable TV quite strategically near the small plano. The latter periodically responds to my urge to pound out Christmas carols, out-of-date hits from the past, and the classical ditties simple enough for rusty expertise.

The secretary, grandly pigeon-holed and refinished, occupies the center of stage since it contains unpaid bills, correspondence, cancelled check files, and various other items of interest. It is usually festooned with post cards from gadabouting friends or relatives, snapshots of recent vintage, and lists. There are lists of things to remember; lists of unanswered letters; lists of school and church activities; and lists of things forgotten that require apologies or financial attention. The secretary, appropriately named I'd supposed because it usually inflicts secretarial urges, is the domineering factor of the room. Because it also contains unfinished manuscripts.

One whole drawer of them, to be exact! And its weekly token dusting causes fleeting shame that deteriorates into studied apathy as the dusting cloth moves quickly over the drawer front to bigger, glossier surfaces. But the nagging is always there. And my nearby typewriter joins the mental reprimand to stare at me almost balefully, even as I whisk it free of dust — and mere traces of whiteout powder mutely attesting to its lack of attention... On a very "good" day, the powder lays like a snowy blanket across the space bar, and the table beneath the machine seems to have endured a heavy frost. But it has been weeks since winter has entered the place; and as I edge almost furtively into my "get-away-from-it-all niche," clutching the half-read newspaper in one hand, coffee cup balanced by the other, I avoid close consideration of the black electric dragon, and shake off the impulse to flee.

To put off further thoughts of writing, I deposit my coffee cup carefully on the piano top, slump down on the bench, and turn to another section of the paper. Small headlines jump out at me in self-recriminatory retribution, and I grown softly in protest.

"Distinguished Author Wins Pulitzer Award for Best Novel..." There follows a lengthy description of the newsworthy event, and a detailed verbal portrait of the celebrity. The name is entirely unfamiliar to me, as are his accomplishments: books that never occupied my living room or inspired any inclination to read them.

Of course, only literary genuises win such prominence in the eyes of the world, I declare aloud, petulantly. I could never hope to achieve such heights. I read on, covering the seventy-five-year-old man's history with envious irritation, noting the wealthy background and expensive schooling, the grants that supported him through lean tiems, and conclude to myself that his world is definitely apart from mine. Obviously an egghead, he would be unable to lower himself to my level and would never have even considered reading any of my amateurish stuff. Disenchanted, I consign the man to the sphere of god-like achievers which looms beyond any of my own expectations, and refold the paper grimly.

Aspirations to greatness aside, I stare at my reticent typewriter for mere seconds before moving to its keyboard. The blank sheet of paper stares back at me from its imprisonment under the paper guide, and the hum of the "on" switch encourages me gently. Words seem to have fled from my brain, even my name escapes me temporarily, and I envision headlines of the following day. "Wife and mother of three succumbs to complete mental paralysis... doctors are at a loss as to what triggered the extraordinary phenomenon..." Then my fingers are moving at last.

The first few pages end up crumpled in the wastebasket. But, finally, the words are coming with split second bursts like the sun peeking from slivered gaps in the overcast. And I realize that a story is taking shape ....

Hours later, I hear the footsteps of homeward children, and glance at the clock accusingly. Just a short time ago it read eight a.m.; now it is nearly four! There are pages of typewritten words on the table next to my purring machine, and I pause to read over the last few paragraphs. A sense of satisfaction wells up within me, and I barely hear the call from the back door, "Mom ... I'm home?"

Supper is disorganized, freezer oriented, and mutually acceptable. "Boy! Pizza twice in the same week! Can we have ice cream, too? Get another can of pop out of the 'fridge, this one's empty! Can Bobby eat with us, Mom? His folks are having liver for supper!"

Later, the family room fills up with a happy if not scientifically nourished group, and I slip away to my corner room in the back. The soft glow of the desk lamp is somehow comforting, and my ballpoint beckons enigmatically. The cacaphony from the other end of the house fades into background noises as the clacking of my typewriter keys waxes with new enthusiasm. I sense heads being thrust into my lamplight momentarily, then retreating into the distant bedlam of switching channels and minor disputes. But I'm on a roll, the words are coming faster now, and I must get it all down on paper before the thing dies or disappears beneath the daily trials of life in the suburbs. Vaguely I hear,

"Mom's writing again..." coupled with shuffling ice cube trays and clinking glasses in the remote environs of the kitchen. The family room will be awash with crumbs, cans, and empty bowls in the morning. I don't care; this moment is for words, paragraphs, and chapters. There is a singing in my soul, poetry comes to mind as my fingers race across the cooperative keys — I know there will be typos galore to correct in the morning — but the fever is upon me, and I must continue.

"Ginge, are you coming to bed?" The plaintive query goes unanswered, and a faintly disheveled mate retraces slippered feet across the hall to resignedly close the door against the automatic tapping of the animated typewriter. The clock reads eleven p.m. and I feel that I have barely begun; but, eventually, the ending is imminent. The heroine gasps in horror, and the hero swings into action. The alien menaces one more time, then dissolves into death throes worthy of the master bard himself. Space ships roar homeward, and a relieved crew reminisces over adventures that threatened sanity and safety. A final quip, and it is done.

My glasses return to their case almost regretfully, and the "off" switch eludes me for a moment. The house is painfully quiet, and I realized that the rest of the family has been as leep for several hours. Even the dog has subsided into gentle snores of contentment on his favorite chair in the family room, after repeated inquisitive forays into my study. All is well.

I make my way through the darkened house, touching thermostats with patriotic accord, checking locks on doors, blankets on kids, and cast a final glance at the oak tree in the front yard. The street light shines through the night, and I notice that the gentle rain has resumed to glaze the undersides of drooping bushes and trees. Nothing stirs, inside or out, and I breathe a sigh of triumph. It has been a good day; tomorrow will be only slightly different, with proofing and editing to do, and a decision to make as to what to do with the story. I'm still wide awake, and know that sleep will be difficult, my mind turbulent with the excitement of finishing the story.

But the barrier has been broken again, and I remind myself that it is still only the beginning. The Pulitzer Prize winner was in his seventies. I have a long way to go, and there will be new frontiers to challenge even after he's been forgotten. The need will always be there, to write in such a way that others will want to read. And although my own format is probably crude, and rejection looms in the future, I feel confident that somewhere, someday, there will be an editor sympathetic to my work. I just have to be patient.

A yawn interrupts my musings, and I react in surprise. As though something heavy has been lifted from my heart, I realize a sudden weariness. The bedroom is buried in darkness, drapes drawn against incursions of noise or light, and I hurry to join "other half" in the deep comfort of covers and pillows. Imagining his face when I can one day wave a publisher's check under his nose, I pat his rumpled head and settle down with a satisfied sigh. Even the drapes cannot shut out the brilliance of the moon's sudden emergence onto a reflecting, rain-slicked world; but I have sunk into drowsy imaginings of editors and publishers, and slumber cannot be further denied.

Must clean the typewriter tomorrow ... surfaces briefly. Then I am in the middle of phaser blasts, wilting plant people, and Starfleet personnel are beckoning me upward into the promise of more to come...



The darkened study brightens faintly as two transparent figures take form in a shaft of moonlight. Movement catches the gleam of gold braid at wrist positions, and two Starfleet uniforms are silhouetted against the outlines of the room. The moonlight swirls thickly around them as though fueled by an unknown power source, and two officers solidify in the soft pool of illumination. The taller one, dusting at his uniform lightly with one hand, peers about them curiously. The other, hands on hips, glances around the perimeter of his visions confidently and turns toward his companion.

"Another mission accomplished, Spock! And my intuition paid off, as usual." Kirk's smile lightens the area perceptably.

Vuican eyebrows elevate slightly to punctuate the owner's retort. "Indeed, Captain, I would not have believed it possible. But then," the alien points out delicately, "you did have the able support of both Dr. McCoy and Mr. Sulu."

Kirk sighs ruefully, crossing his arms to regard his first officer with resignation. "Behind every successful starship captain — "

"-- is a very capable crew," Spock finished gently. He studies the tricorder in his right hand. "What is our next assignment, Jim?"

"She'll think of something, Spock, I'm sure. In the meantime..."

As he spoke, both images coalesced and collapsed into a single beam of light which danced into a shadowy corner of the room, just beyond the level of detection by mortal eyes. In one fell swoop,

it narrowed and spiraled harmlessly into the battered, silent metal machine nestled on a paper-strewn desk. The "off" button hiccupped weakly as the typewriter hummed to life briefly, then was silent again.

And the moon disappeared once more behind a thickening cloud.





by V.L. Thorn

Pray, listen to me, lad and lass, Fair warning here I now present; Before your little ones grow up Take heed of my heartfelt lament:

Screen inimitable Nimoy Magic
Shield from silken Shatner Charm;
Placate with bicycles, bats and balls —
View convention attendance with alarm!
Hide your books, and star charts, too;
Keep secret — do not let them see
Shimmering starship majesty
Hanging in black space, floating free.
Ignore the madness of frantic fans
Writing — drawing — meeting in threes;
By tens of thousands making plans,
Assessing movie — dissecting series.

Beware of love poems, wistful, sad,
Revealing impossible, wishful dream;
Avoid the curious perusal of
Posh 'zines concocted by fandom's cream.
Betray not fantasy to your young,
Protect from collective insanity
Of avid fans' tempestuous love,
Protest -- out loud -- your fidelity!

Born in a flash of imagination,
Star Trek was sparked from one man's mind,
Kindled and fanned with inspiration —
A tribute to future, improved mankind.
But once bitten, no turning back —
Years were spent on story and scene.
A series, a movie, ideas increased
Belieing Gene's world would never have been!

Time hurried by, books made the rounds
As authors created and actors grew old.
Still, fans wanted more, urging them on -Would fantasy fade to reality's mold?
Should logic continue absolute tradition
Where love, trust and patience remain undernourished?
Or ...

Could new generations equate IDIC
Where brotherhood, peace and prosperity flourished?
No!

This madness, this lunacy has to be cured!

This desire for a new world is doomed and deferred.

For thousands of years this same word was preached

To skeptics — nonbelievers — who couldn't be reached ...

So shelter your youth from impossible dreams;
Imbue them with sane dissertations on war;
Sustain the inherited modes of intent
To prejudice, born generations before!
Our scientists, prophets, professors and seers
Predict Armageddon's inevitable end.
As mankind evolves to formidable fate:
Better branded a scoffer than believer in legend?

## James T. Kirk vs the Computer

by Jon B. Green

Why does Captain Kirk hate computers? You don't think he does? Did you know that in all the years we have known him he has destroyed no less than twelve sophisticated computers, androids, and other programmed devices?

Let's run the tapes back through our minds. Early in their five year mission, Kirk has Spock program the Eminian war computer so it will destroy itself after one phaser shot from him (A TASTE OF ARMAGEDDON). Later, he has Scotty blast the planetary computer controlling Gamma Trianguli VI and its inhabitants (THE APPLE). After that, he rams a starship hulk containing a supercritical impulse power reactor down the throat of a runaway super-weapon (THE DOOMSDAY MACHINE). Still not satisfied, he orders Spock to shoot the computer controlling the Kalandan defense system (THAT WHICH SURVIVES).

But that's not all. Our Captain seems to take pleasure in forcing a computer to destroy itself with its own logic. Remember Landru (THE RETURN OF THE ARCHONS), Nomad (THE CHANGELING), Norman (I, MUDD), and M-5 (THE ULTIMATE COMPUTER)? And don't forget that he shot Brown in the "stomach" and convinc - and seems this programming, which resulted in his and Andrea's atomization (WHAT ARE LITTLE GIRLS MADE OF?). He even accidentally (and perhaps selfishly) caused the death of Rayna by revealing to her that she was an android and then forcing her to choose between Flint and himself (REQUIEM FOR METHUSELAH).

Wait a minute! Is Cap'n Jim really this cold-blooded? Does he have any reason to hold computing machinery in such low regard? How about the amusement park planet of SHORE LEAVE? The computer running the place had Kirk believing one of his best friends was dead before the nature of the establishment was made clear to him. And he and his entire crew had to fight their own ship's computer when the essence of Jack the Ripper took control of it (WOLF IN THE FOLD). In THE PARADISE SYNDROME, he was zapped by the planet's meteor deflection system when he activated a control out of sequence. Then, in order to save still another planet from being hit by an asteroid (which was also inhabited itself) he and Spock had to fight their way into the control room against the computer's defenses (FOR THE WORLD IS HOLLOW AND I HAVE TOUCHED THE SKY).

Replaying all this has not yet shown us the most significant incident in the shaping of the captain's attitude toward computers. This would be his confrontation with the Enterprise main computer in COURT MARTIAL. He was accused of murder, and the most damning evidence was presented by the computer. Although it was later proven that the computer was tampered with, and Kirk was acquitted, he was no doubt strongly affected by Sam Cogley's emotional appeal on his behalf during the trial: "In the name of humanity fading in the shadow of the machine ... "

It is obvious now what Kirk is doing. He is holding back the shadows, protecting human(oid) freedom. He feels so strongly about this that he does this often in apparent direct violation of the Prime Directive (but that's another story). Even in his time people must fear things they don't understand—computers are probably so advanced they seem magical. This altruistic bent of Kirk's is easier to believe than his holding some grudge against all electronic devices after a childhood accident with a malfunctioning floor-sweeping droid, and it is this sense of vitality in the human spirit that helps make STAR TREK unique.

## Logic and the Vulcan Mythos

by Karen C. Hunter

§§ This report contains CLASSIFIED material.

Prepared by Dr. M'Benga, specialist in Vulcan medicine, Starfleet Surgeon General's Office

\$5 This report has been prepared for those members of Starfleet who are required by their duties to work in direct contact with Vulcans. Careful perusal will give one a greater familiarity with the psychology of Vulcan thought and enable one to understand more readily what Vulcans mean when they say they follow a system of logic.

Human intelligence has been measured in arbitrary terms based on scientific examinations with the mean given at 100 points. All Humans can be placed for convenience on this scale. The distribution follows a standard bell curve with the vast majority of humans falling somewhere between 80 and 120 points. While it is always misleading to compare too closely between species, it is apparent that the mean of Vulcan intelligence is placed much higher on the same scale, at approximately 130 points. When the two distributions are compared, we see that all Vulcans measure higher than the average for Humans and can go a great deal higher than is considered possible for Humans.

This fact is not of much value in considering Starfleet personnel. Personnel are selected on the basis of standard tests and are required to fall within a certain range. Therefore, any Vulcans met in the course of Starfleet duties will be of comparable intelligence levels to any Humans in similar positions, and the Human should not feel any lack of ability in comparison.

There is, however, a related difficulty to be encountered. At this point, the Human unfamiliar with highly intelligent, or "gifted" Humans, should acquaint himself/herself with the literature. For those so acquainted, a brief summary will suffice. Very intelligent Humans, particularly those in the upper two percent of intelligence levels, tend to look at the world a little differently than the rest of Humanity. They, on the whole, tend to behave as if the world can be controlled rationally and to be frustrated when it is impossible to do so. A supreme example of this is the inability of the lower grade student who is poor in basic arithmetic, cannot spell, and has an atrocious handwriting. These are basic learning tools, which are impossible to reason oneself into acquiring, but must be learned by rote and practice, two techniques the gifted tend to avoid actively.

Vulcans, for the purposes of this report, can be considered a race of the highly gifted. Two brief examples capable of verification from Starship records, concern Spock, First Officer of the Enterprise, and his father Sarek, the Ambassador from Vulcan. On a recent Babel mission, Sarek apparently tried to reason himself out of a serious heart condition. His poor health should logically have prevented his participation in such a strenuous activity. Similarly, Spock has often tried to reason himself into controlling events that cannot be so manipulated. An example of this is the disastrous results of his command of the Galileo shuttlecraft in the Murasaki phenomenon. Despite much evidence to the contrary, he made no effort to consider the emotional responses of the natives and continued to behave as if they could be considered rationally motivated.

At this point it may be well to remember that the Vulcan system of logic has never been adequately studied by Human observers. They may have a somewhat different interpretation of the word "logic" than is possible for Humans to understand. Perhaps even a different word should have been used by the original translators of Vulcan thought.

For example, Vulcans believe in the IDIC concept — infinite diversity in infinite combinations. To Humans this logically implies acceptance of the differences among all peoples. Yet, Vulcan children are permitted, unpunished, to call Spock an "Earther," a term with definite pejorative connotations. T'Pau asks Spock, "Art thee Human or art thee Vulcan?" again, with the connotation that Vulcan is Better. Spock choses to "exorcise" (his word) his Human half, as it makes him less Vulcan. Sarek apparently suppresses his curly hair.

Also, Vulcans believe in non-violence. Yet they are capable of the execution technique of

Tal-shaya; they are expert with the lirpa and ahnwoon, personal combat weapons; and an execution figure with axe attends Vulcan weddings — just in case there is a challenge and "cowardice is shown."

Vulcans often declare that they believe in reason over emotion, and it is apparent that their culture has been designed to encourage such attitudes among all members. Yet, the greatest Vulcan of them all, Surak, shows us an emotional committeent to non-violence. His reason should show him on Excalbia, as it does us, that there are other non-violent ways to stop a war than going uninformed into an enemy camp. Sarek, the cool and dispassionate ambassador, blames his son for his human characteristics and picks fights with a) that same son, b) his human wife, and c) the Teilarite ambassador. Even T'Pring, Spock's intended bride, prefers another to Spock. Her totally inadequate explanation, which Spock calls "flawlessly logical" is that she prefers not to be the consort of a legend. No comment is necessary.

With the above details in mind, the following items are presented as study and discussion questions. There are no known "right" answers, as Vulcans do not permit independent observers on Vulcan, and records do not show enough information on these points to be conclusive.

- 1. Vulcan is a planet of the star 40 eridani, a red sun. The planet is close to the sun, with a nearly circular orbit that prevents wide seasonal variations. It does not have a moon, but there are other planets in close orbit, one of which is a gas giant, which apparently affects the planet in some fashion. The period of rotation and the annual orbit do not fit into a regular and arbitrary time system. The calendar follows a rough three season division, and a unit similar to a month exists. (One known as Tasmeen is mentioned in Starfleet records.) How do Vulcans deal with the inaccuracies and irregularities of such an arrangement? Consider: even Humans are disturbed by the standard day/month/year system of Earth and the extra day necessary every four years to adjust to reality.
- 2. Weather has long been one of the greatest inconveniences of planetary life. What do Vulcans do? We know their planet is harsh and the weather violent. In addition, they have volcanoes, sandstorms, and blistering heat on a scale unknown here. Do they accept it, ignore it, or circumvent it logically? How do you circumvent weather logically?
- 3. To the average Human, dust is a personal imposition. You clean the house on one day, and all that work should be rewarded by remaining cleaned. Dust should not settle on the top of the refrigerator unless wanted. It is repetitive and time-wasting to be dusting daily. On Vulcan dust is infinitely more prevalent than on most of Earth. Not only that, but Vulcans are what we might call "low tech." They do not have the vast power systems and elaborate labor saving devices common to most Human planets, so that housecleaning robots and continuous clean are not available. Again, do they ignore dust, accept it, or have a logical solution?
- 4. Babies are the acid test of any Human's rationality. A new human infant has to be the most emotional, least logical entity in the universe. It is self-centered, and for a certain period of time, totally impossible to deal with reasonably. Any Human who attempts to deal with them so usually ends up in a state any decent jello would envy. There is no evidence that Vulcan babies are any different. In fact, since Vulcans and Humans can interbreed, they are genetically compatible; and therefore Vulcans are unlikely to have a genetic predisposition towards early rationality. Even assuming Vulcan children are socialized faster than human ones, there still has to be some period of adjustment and pure infant behavior. Do Vulcan parents accept this with understanding and patience, knowing that the child will soon grow up? Or do they once in a while get just a little upset when their plans are disrupted once again, perhaps say something like "feldercarb," or even lose their belief in non-violence and smack the damn kid?

From the above discussion and facts, it should be obvious that there are vast discrepancies between the desired behavior on Vulcan, the mindset of Vulcans, and the realities of dealing with situations that cannot be controlled logically. Vulcans desire logic and reason above all things, and their high intelligence predisposes them to this type of thought. In addition, their culture has been structured in such a way as to, in most instances, make rational activity acceptable and obvious. They have, however, by design or accident, neglected to take into account many things which are not and never can be logical on an absolute basis. Yet their cultural patterns are such that it is difficult for them to deal with such discrepancies, and they tend to behave as though these do not exist.

It is this point that the Human must keep in mind firmly when dealing with Vulcans. It becomes too easy to take them at their own evaluation as rational and logical, and to blame oneself for any errors made in working together. Certainly, Humans are emotional creatures and often tend to select emotional responses when rational ones are more appropriate to the situation. Yet Vulcans tend to

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select rational answers when emotional ones are necessary. It is for this reason that Human/Vulcan teams have proven very successful in Starship exploration. Always remember that the most successful mission of a Starship yet known was under the direction of a Human captain, James T. Kirk, and a Vulcan first officer, Mr. Spock. It is an unbeatable combination.



## The Engineer's Log

by Jon B. Green

SCENE: The Transporter Room, where a figure is materializing on the platform. It is

Captain Kirk disguised as as a Centurion, and he is carrying the stolen Romulan

Cloaking Device. As he dashes toward the door, he shouts, "Warp Nine, Mr. Spock!"

Wait a minute. When the Enterprise was pursuing the Gorn ship in ARENA, it could barely manage Warp 8 for five minutes. It shouldn't be able to do Warp 9 at all. What has happened that we don't know about? For that matter, why do the phasers look like beams when they used to look like the photon torpedoes do back when there weren't any photon torpedoes? Confused? Well, go back and read Tim Farley's article, "Changes in the Technology of Star Trek" back in TREKISM # 19. He explains how technology evolves and improves in the ST universe just as it does in our own. The reason we don't hear about it is because we don't need to know.

Let's consider our universe for a moment. All pilots have a Pilot's Logbook in which they record information like the type of aircraft they are flying, their points of departure and arrival, whether they are pilot-in-command or not, the conditions of the flight, and more. It is similar to Kirk's "Captain's Log", although his is more like a diary. All aircraft have log books, too, called Engine and Airframe Logs, where all flight time is recorded, as is all maintenance (overhauls, repairs, and equipment additions or replacements). It seems logical that if Kirk has a Captain's Log and McCoy has a Medical Log, then Scotty would have an Engineer's Log in which he would keep a record of all the/his repairs, modifications, and improvements on/to the Enterprise. All of the changes in technology Tim talks about in his article would be recorded here, leaving no reason for them to appear in the Captain's Log. Kirk takes it for granted that his crew and Starfleet (and we) always know the current operating condition of the Enterprise when he makes his entries. Since his log sets the stage for each episode, and does so much better than would an obtrusive, onmiscient narrator, and much quicker and more imaginatively than would lengthy lectures to spear carriers, there is a reason to listen to excerpts from his log and really no reason to do the same for Scotty's. In fact, there are reasons we don't want to hear from Scotty:

"Engineer's Log, Stardate 4122.6. Installed bineuronic quadraflow sensor array unit serial no. 41X379/07 in secondary intercooler control preamp monitor, section 6B33, main magnatonic flux chiller, port side, as per T0:03:11:20, drawing 146:12, sub 2, plan 31, sheet 914 ... "

This could go on for hundreds of pages when (if it was necessary to make a point) all they would have to do is:

KIRK: (passing Scotty in the corridor) "And what have you been up to, Engineer?"

SCOTT: "Well, sir, the lads and I have been tinkering with the main engines. They should do Warp 9 now."

Or, with much less imagination, following the scene at the opening of this article:

SPOCK: (on the bridge) "Aye, sir." (He turns to Sulu, who touches the proper controls.)

CHEKOV: (to Spock) "It's a good thing Mr. Scott souped up our engines after our run-in with the Gorns, isn't it, Mr. Spock?

Sounds silly, doesn't it? We don't need to be told this. We don't need to see the action slow down for an explanation of something we are already aware of. We've read the Engineer's Log. We know Scotty is keeping the Enterprise tuned up with the latest in 23rd century technology. We know that early in its five year mission, the Enterprise's main phasers were made much more efficient and were later augmented by the installation of photon torpedoes. We know Scotty is constantly learning from Starfleet engineers (and from aliens; see Tim's article) how to vastly increase the top-end limit of the warp drive. What we want to see is how our heroes use this incredible machine to get themselves out of the trouble they've gotten into. We want to see how Kirk and crew react to the universe the Enterprise has taken them to — we don't care how it's done this. We want to see the Enterprise crew ... boldly go where no man has gone before!

### EPILOGUE:

I am very technically oriented: I drive friends and relatives crazy when I nitpick an episode to shreds from strictly an engineering standpoint. For instance: How does a phaser set for stun know how much energy to fire at a target that is invalid, aged, or possessing unknown tolerance (ie, an alien). It doesn't matter. I realize that Star Trek is about humans, not hardware, and I love it for that.



## To Seek Out New Life

## by Katherine Gillen

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"I was just thinking about the buffalo." So ends the premiere episode of "Star Trek," shown on a September night seventeen years ago. At the time it must have seemed an oddly wistful note to end on, for what seemed to be yet another the-monster-chases-us-we-chase-the-monster story from science fiction. The "monster" in this case, in an episode entitled THE MAN TRAP, is no monster at all, but a last-of-its-kind member of an otherwise extinct species. With its death, after a rampage of killing, Captain James Kirk voices his regret. This pivotal character, a man of the future, has a conscience. There are no trophies on his wall. In his words or his actions, he frequently refuses to be labeled as a killer or predator (A TASTE OF ARMADEDDON, ARENA, SPECTRE OF THE GUN). Kirk is set as an example of the best of mankind for his time. He does possess a strong element of machismo but does not feel a need to display it through his prowess as a hunter. He is an explorer of life, not a butcher. As he himself states to members of another world, "A species that enslaves other beings is hardly superior—mentally or otherwise" (GAMESTERS OF TRISKELION). No man has seen more of a diversity of life in all its forms; and if he ever held any chauvinistic concepts about Homo sapiens, he is soon forced to relinquish them. All life must be respected in the "Star Trek" universe, for nothing and no one may be what it seems.

In an episode entitled ERRAND OF MERCY, what appear to be rather backward humanoids are actually a form of intelligent life, so different and advanced that they need no bodies at all. Once again the Captain is forced to reconsider his actions and reassess his views. "We think of ourselves as the most powerful beings in the universe. It's unsettling to discover that we're wrong." This concept of different being better (at least in some ways) returns again and again. In IS THERE IN TRUTH NO BEAUTY? a member of a species known as Medusans can cause madness in humans who only chance to see them. But, as one character remarks, "How do we know if he is too ugly to bear, or too beautiful to bear?" Further, the Medusans are described as having sublime thoughts and as possessing great navigational abilities due to their ability to perceive the universe in their own unique way. In fact, so great are the qualities of this very alien race that a human female, Dr. Miranda Jones, falls in love with one of its members. After some typical protests about the need for one's own kind, the woman does leave with the Medusan and is highly respected for it.

In this episode the concept of IDIC (Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combination) is introduced.

Mr. Spock wears the piece of jewelry called an IDIC and Dr. Jones recognizes it. it is not until the end, however, when Dr. Jones is forced to face her own human fallabilities and prejudices that she understands what it means:

JONES: "The glory of creation is in its infinite diversity."

SPOCK: "And in the ways our differences combine to create meaning and beauty."

Without understanding this, Miranda Jones could not have gone off with the Medusan, at least not successfully. Her mind, though intelligent, was not fully opened to the beauty of life until then. Her eyes, though blind, could only then truly see.

Another member of yet another species, named simply and aptly "The Companion" also displays and even teaches at least one Human much about compassion, sacrifice and love. The episode is METAMORPHOSIS, a name which obviously signifies a change. Who is changed? The Companion changes her form from a rather nebulous, sparkly creature to that of a formerly dying Human female. But a Human named Zephram Cochrane, a man left over from another century (kept young by the Companion's care and special powers), also changes. After shouting and calling the Companion an "inhuman monster" (a display that particularly shocks Dr. McCoy and Mr. Spock), he changes with the realization of the depth of this alien love. By taking Human form, the Companion loses all her special and superior abilities. It is a step down for her, a sacrifice. Joited, Cochrane realizes how much he depends on and needs the Companion. This realization — fulfilled completely when the two simply join hands — is one of the finer moments in interspecies communication. It is an affirmation of a human being's ability to grow beyond himself and his chauvinistic view of his species.

Perhaps the classic episode of this kind, though, came in the first season: THE DEVIL IN THE DARK. In this story an unseen "monster" is terrorizing the miners on a planet. The creature strikes swiftly and:silently and somehow burns a man with a fast-acting acid. All that is left for those who come upon the remains is a skeleton whose flesh has been burnt away. It seems an unreasonable, unjustifiable and absolutely horrible act, one that sets all the miners into a frightened rage against the beast. Fortunately, a disaster is averted -- and not the one the viewer is led to expect -- because Mr. Spock is unable to accept the word unreasonable. No creature should act in such a murderous manner without reason. And reason there is. The "monster" is also the last of her kind, but only temporarily. This creature, called a Horta, is the mother of her race, the guardian of thousands of eggs which the miners had been carelessly and thoughtlessly destroying. Unable to do anything else, the Horta had done what she could to protect her kind -- fight back. So different was the Horta (its very substance was based on silicon instead of carbon) that the Humans had not been able to identify either her or her eggs as members of an intelligent race. Only with the touch of an alien hand -- Spock's in the E.S.P. mind meld -- could contact be made and the disaster of all-out destruction of the Horta avoided. The dirge-like litany in which Spock expresses the Horta's grief is profoundly affecting each time it is heard. And Kirk's response when heading off an attacking group of miners is enough to stir any member of an animal rights group: "The first man that shoots is dead!" THE DEVIL IN THE DARK shows that even in the 23rd century mankind has primitive reactions to overcome; but, more importantly, it shows that they can be overcome.

. . . . .

A number of people who do not like "Star Trek" or any kind of science fiction do so because of a negative response to the advanced technology, gadgets, and machinery so often prevalent, if only as a backdrop, in almost any plot. Yet "Star Trek" expresses and gives room to this feeling too:

"There are many who are uncomfortable with what we have created. It is almost a biological rebellion. A profound revulsion against the planned communities, the programming, the ster-ilized, artfully balanced atmospheres. They hunger for an Eden, where Spring comes."

"We all do. The cave is deep in our memories."

(THE WAY TO EDEN)

Although the eloquent words are from Spock and the shorter reply Kirk's, the captain is often in a position where he must fight against some onmicient, omnipresent super-machine which has upset the "natural order" of some world or situation. He "unpulls the plug" many times (RETURN OF THE ARCHONS, WHAT ARE LITTLE GIRLS MADE OF?, THE APPLE, ULTIMATE COMPUTER, etc.). All of this can be seen (and rightfully so) as "Star Trek" acting, in effect, as its own watchdog. The Star Trek universe, unlike so

many other TV shows, doesn't fall in love with itself. While presenting so much of an optimistic future, it also shows us the problems and hazards of this future. When man develops too much power there is the danger of not only thinking himself a god (as we do every time we call a wildflower a weed and therefore unworthy), but trying to act like one (as in RETURN TO TOMORROW where the Enterprise's crew discovers the remnants of advanced humanoids who have destroyed all life on their planet). There is also the terrifying example of the vivisection tables being turned on man when the crew is subjected to horrible and apparently pointless lab experiments in THE EMPATH. A species we could grow to hate, due to its cool cruelty in these experiments, shows us its hauntingly humane side at the end when it speaks to the Humans:

"Your will to survive, your love of life, your passion to know ... Everything that is truest and best in all species of being has been revealed by you. Those are the qualities that make a civil-ization worthy to survive."

Would that our scientists could speak so compassionately to those they experiment upon!

Yet this is not an overwhelming theme in "Star Trek." Basically, the use (not the abuse or misuse) of technology enables man to maintain what might be lost in nature, preserve it in its original ecology, shy away from interference of what is best left alone. Consider the non-interference credo that all starship crews live by, summarized by Kirk, "I don't think we have the right or the wisdom to interfere, however a planet is evolving."

An untouched, innocent Paradise is something Spock often speaks of, even longs for (and finally achieves in death in STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KHAN). Even Kirk mentions sadly that there is for him, as Captain, "no beach to walk on." Nature has not lost its importance to the technologically advanced Human of the future. On the contrary, as man moved out and gained a better perspective of the beauty and the magnitude of the diversity of life in all its forms, life became more cherished. As usual, knowledge brought not only understanding, but a sense of value. With all the archaic norms of what was right and necessary and beautiful thrown out the window, all creatures, all life forms had to be regarded with a new respect. (In STAR TREK II, the scientists go to great pains to make sure that the Genesis experiment will be exploded on a world where there is absolutely no life, not even microscopic.) Humans are, after all, as Spock comments, "only a tiny minority in this galaxy" and should maintain a sense of perspective when dealing with other species.

Spock's very presence, perhaps more than anything, guarantees the we will maintain at least some perspective. He is always there, a constant reminder in alien form that all is not what it seems, and that "different" can mean "wonderful." Usually quiet, with only the words he deems necessary spoken, he can by a simple sentence express (and stun) with his views as an outsider: "I'm frequently appalled by the low regard you Earthmen have for life" (THE GALILEO SEVEN).

A devout vegetarian, with the pacifist viewpoint of his planet Vulcan, Spock provides us with a living example of a being who always looks at a species with interest, not disgust, equanimity, not fear. Kirk may be the near-ideal man of the future with whom we can identify racially, but Spock is the one who calls us to something outside ourselves. At times we all feel alien among our own kind; Spock always feels that way. His is a dual heritage of Earth and Vulcan and while this doubly enriches him, it also makes him without a home. Starffeet is his home, as his mother comments (THE JOURNEY TO BABEL), and this makes the universe of Star Trek even more appealing. If Spock loves his life on a starship, then there must be something to it!

With it's general mastery of a technology that could seem threatening, with its respect of other life forms and constant efforts to know all there is to know of this mystery we call the Universe, it is no wonder that "Star Trek" attracts as many followers as it does. It does not present a perfect view of man and his actions, but neither does it present a dead-end view of our fallabilities.

Mankind is great and capable of greatness, but only when he recognizes that his species is not the only worthwhile one. He must work with other species to obtain something even greater. Achievement together — whether with a Medusan, Horta or Vulcan — is so much sweeter.

"We're a most promising species, Mr. Spock, as predators go. Did you know that?"

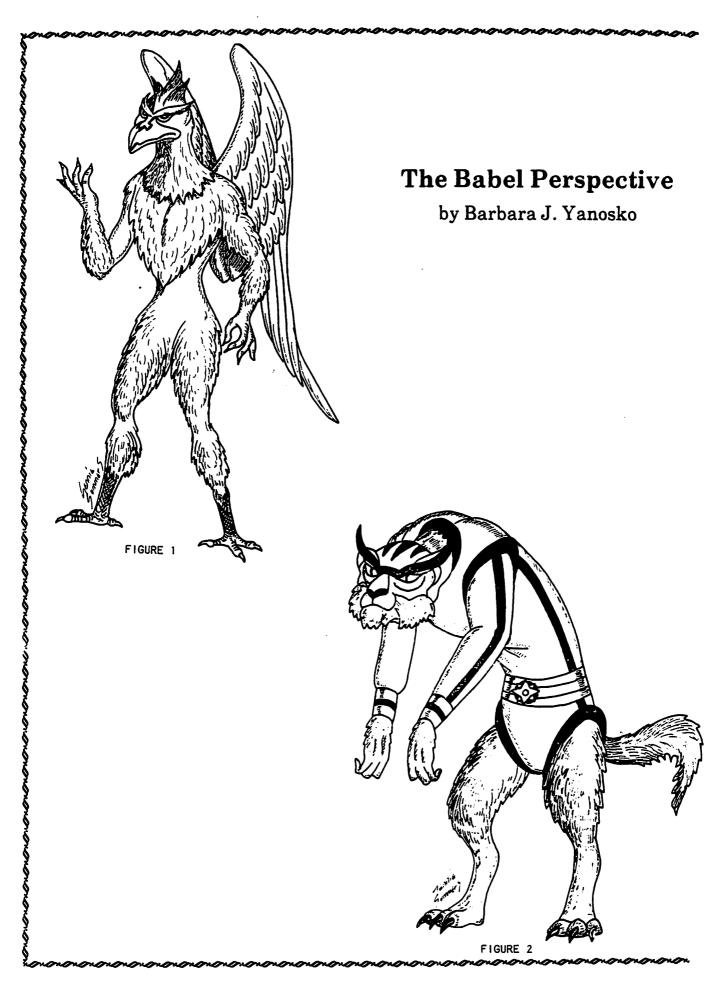
"I frequently have my doubts."

"I don't. Not anymore. And maybe in a thousand years or so, we'll be able to prove it."

(ARENA)

Let us hope, Captain, that it does not take so long.









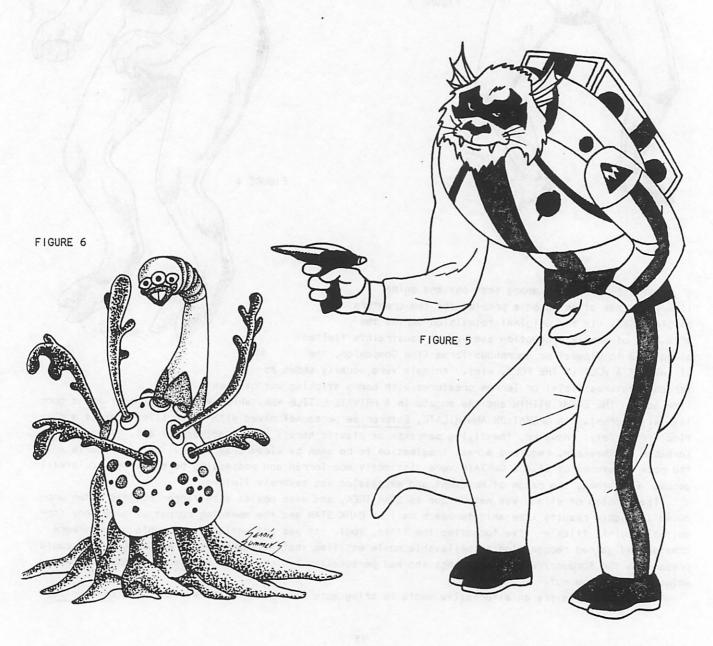
Infinite diversity among sentient and animal
life forms has often posed a problem for the creators
of STAR TREK. In the original television series the
pressures of weekly production and budget constraints limited
alien life to bipedal or amorphous forms (The Companion, the
villain of A WOLF IN THE FOLD, etc). Animals were usually shown as
Terran creatures (Isis) or Terran creatures with horns sticking out of them
(the dog in THE ENEMY WITHIN and the mugatu in A PRIVATE LITTLE WAR, which was both bipedal and a gorilla with horns). In OPERATION ANNIHILATE, Enterprise personnel mixed with alien life forms of a distinctive variety. However, the flying pancakes of plastic hardly seemed animate at all. Tribbles,
loveable as they are, required a real imagination to be seen by viewers as alive. Only the horta and
the rock creatures of SAVAGE CURTAIN were distinctly non-Terran and possessing personality and intelligence. Even then, the range of movement and expression was severely limited.

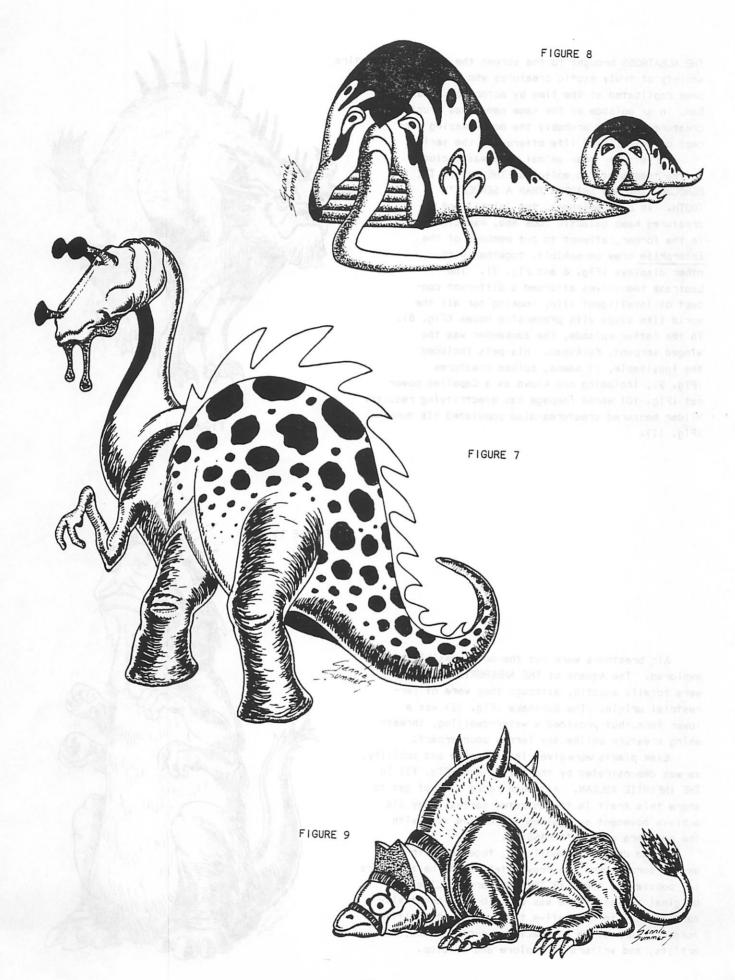
The problem of aliens was not unique to STAR TREK, and even movies with larger budgets often produced laughable results (the animate beach ball of DARK STAR and the menacing carpet of some very forgettable sci-fi flick -- I've forgotten the title, too). It was not until Jim Henson's muppets were created and gained recognition as believable movie entities that filmmakers such as George Lucas could present on the screen truly alien beings who had personality and character -- even a despicable character as Jabba the Hut.

The writers did try an alternative media to bring more alienness to the world of the Enterprise,

through the animated series. Only twenty-two half-hour episodes were produced, but creative energy expressed itself in a multitude of sentient and nonsentient alien creatures. Even the bridge was opened to this brave new world, with bipedal Mress and tripodal Lt. Arrex. Although the series was too sophisticated for a Saturday morning audience and what was then expected by the already-growing cadre of Trekkers, the stories maintained the familiar format and used the voices of the original actors. The animateds are mostly excluded from current Trek literature, but they paved the way for the Ceti eel of STAR TREK: THE WRATH OF KAHN and Kruge's pet in STAR TREK: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK. For those who never saw the animated series, Alan Dean Foster's STAR TREK LOGS give a good flavor — if not the exact story line — of the shows.

The range of creatures introduced in twenty-two short episodes was amazing. The first episode, YESTERYEAR, showed Aleek-OM, an avian humanoid historian much like the Skorr of the later episode, JI-HAD (Fig. 1). The intelligent, very alien aliens outnumber the animal-like fauna two to one, with several episodes carrying the bulk of the strange life forms. One of those episodes was JIHAD, which concentrated on intelligence and made creative extrapolations on felines (The Vedala, Fig. 2), avian (Skorr), insectoid (EM/3 Green, Fig. 3) and reptilian (Sord, Fig. 4) patterns. Unfortunately, the claim for complete originality was marred by the appearance of the Kzinti (Fig. 5) in SLAVER WEAPON three episodes prior to JIHAD. The Kzinti resembled the Vedala very closely in form, if not in temperament.





THE ALBATROSS brought to the screen the Damians, an entire society of truly exotic creatures who could not have been replicated at the time by actors or models.

Bem, in an episode of the same name, was a colony creature, and was probably the most amazing concept of intelligent life offered in the series.

Variety in lower animal life was included in the themes of two episodes, THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER and HOW SHARPER THAN A SERPENT'S TOOTH. In both episodes, the intelligent creatures keep galactic zoos and, especially in the former, attempt to put members of the Enterprise crew on exhibit, together with other displays (Fig. 6 and Fig. 7). The Lactrans themselves afforded a different concept of intelligent life, looking for all the world like slugs with prehensile noses (Fig. 8). In the latter episode, the zookeeper was the winged serpent, Kulkukan. His pets included the inevitable, it seems, spiked creatures (Fig. 9), including one known as a Capellan power cat (Fig. 10) whose rampage has electrifying results. Milder mannered creatures also populated his domain (Fig. 11).



FIGURE 10

Air breathers were not the only possibilities explored. The Aquans of THE AMBERGRIS ELEMENT were totally aquatic, although they were of Terrestrial origin. The Sursnake (Fig. 12) was a lower form, but provided a water-dwelling, threatening creature unlike any Terran counterpart.

Even plants were given intelligence and mobility, as was demonstrated by the Phylosians (Fig. 13) in THE INFINITE VULCAN. Although rocks did not get to share this trait in the animated series, they did achieve movement and gained impressive size with the monsters of MUDD'S PASSION.

These creatures mentioned, together with other exotic forms, were the "new life" which the animators saw populating the STAR TREK universe. Like the original series, there was a vision and creativity hard at work to keep alive the dream just a little longer, and provide a legacy for current fans, artists, and writers to explore and develop.



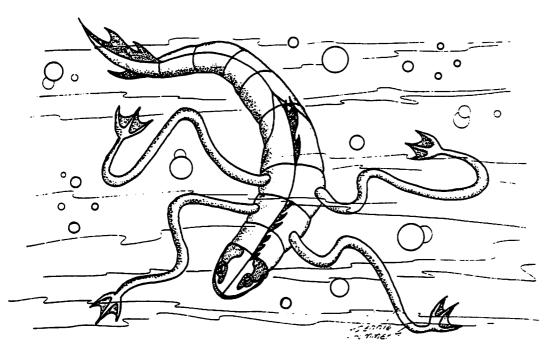
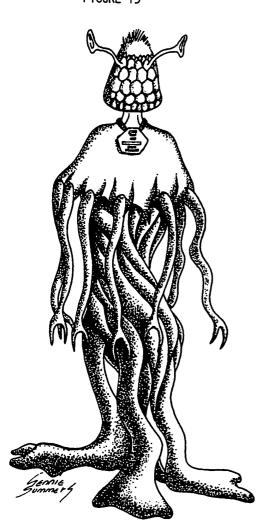


FIGURE 12

FIGURE 13



## SOURCE MATERIAL FOR THIS ARTICLE:

Foster, Alan Dean, Star Log, #1 through 10, published by Ballantine Books, 1974-78

Trimble, Bjo, The Star Trek Concordance, published by Ballantine Books, 1976

[The Editor wishes to acknowledge -- and thank profusely -- LuAnn Brady, who conducted extensive preliminary research for this article.]

Insufficient Data

by Rosemarie Eierman

Compiled from columns in TREKISM's 16 through 30

We see our present as though shadows on the cavern wall, according to Plato. Or perhaps as St. Paul wrote, 'Through a glass, darkly.' How clear can a vision of the future be? STAR TREK could only present a limited view of a possible 23rd century, the scope further narrowed by the pressures of time and budget, the need to appeal to the mass audience, and the rigidness of the television format. Not to mention that getting Saurian Brandy and location shots of Triskellon was quite impossible! Occasionally the producers got the science all wrong, but they tried their best. And this is exactly what turned so many of us on to STAR TREK. It dared to seriously attempt to define the values of the future, to handle thought-provoking themes, to maintain internal consistency, to allow its characters growth, and yet to poke fun at institutions, ideas, and even itself. And yet — despite the Shakespeare and the Milton, the unusual lighting and camera techniques, the fascinating costumes and culture — there were those awful stereotypes, the obviously slap-dash model work, the trite plots, and the ghastly blatant messages. Dark, indeed, and full of dreary shadows.

That paragraph was written in November or December, 1978, before any of the movies appeared. We had only the television shows and the promise of a return of our heroes on which to survive. Things have changed a lot since then, this column included. At first it zeroed in on inconsistencies, obvious lapses, and flat-out errors. Concepts and cultures came under the glass next, then ST I was torn apart into little shreds (V'jer itself couldn't have done a better job!). The TV series still got "knocked", at least in the form of "Cabbages", and occasionally with a whole section, as new ideas surfaced or where suggested by friends and readers.

This last group (from TREKisM's #16-30) was not included in TaL III due to lack of space, but is here presented so that faithful readers of this zine have them all. These are the sociological studies, the extrapolations, the comments on ST II, some lighter material from the TV series, and a whole bevy of absurd story beginnings (which are still available for use, provided the stories appear in TREKISM).

Special thanks must be given to Sandra Cunningham for the exchange of letters which produced "The Great Vulcan Shell Game." More than half the ideas in that section are hers, or the offshoot of something she wrote. Thanks also to Karen Hunter and Ginny Thorn for their ideas and support.

### THE GREAT VULCAN SHELL GAME, PART ONE

What we know about Vulcans we know because a) Spock has told us, b) Vulcan has permitted it to be known, or c) someone has deduced it from observable behavior of Vulcans off or on their planet (mostly off). We can be certain that they are stronger, more intelligent, and have keener senses than Humans. They are touch telepaths, vegetarians, masters of logical thought, and have a rather unusual reproductive cycle. We also know that Vulcans are a very private people, which means that most of what we "know" is the result of c). The general impression seems to be that Vulcans are a most serene race, model citizens of the galaxy, pacifists spending their livess as traders, scholars, scientists, and ambassadors in search of truth and IDIC. They cannot lie, they never fight unless there is no logical alternative, their loyalty, integrity, and sense of duty and personal honor are beyond reproach.

But are we not taking Vulcans too much at their own word, extrapolating too much from their own point of view? If Vulcan ideals were practiced totally, there would be no need for T'Pau to admonish Spock, "Are our ceremonies for outworlders?" Not merely "this ceremony," but "our ceremonies." Something is being hidden.

The events which are most revealing are those of AMOK TIME. Shown is a marriage ceremony that ritualizes murder and slavery in a society that reveres life and demands fulfillment of each individual's potential as much as logic and tradition. Probably the words and symbols used are empty formality, much as the request in our marriage ceremonies for people to speak up if they know a reason why the couple should not be "joined." Yet T'Pau says, "It comes down from the time of the beginning, without change. This is the Vulcan heart, this is the Vulcan soul." Strange words for a formality. And given all we now about biology and society, "Koon-ut-kal-if-fee is the ceremony upon which all existence hangs. Thus we not only have to ignore these fundamental inconsistenciew, we have to ignore the fact that Vulcan should have replaced this ceremony to eliminate murder and slavery in accordance with its own professed beliefs and Federation law — and we are in the space of one episode forced to swallow a staggering series of contradictions:

- -- Vulcans are terribly embarrassed when talking about sex and hide their customs from offworlders. They don't even talk about it among themselves (How do they prepare for the ceremonies??). This is a very emotional reaction to a normal and essential biological process.
- -- instead of doing something about an obvious social problem, they hide behind custom.
- -- Spock is asked why he has brought outworlders to the ceremony. He replies that they (ie, Kirk and McCoy) are not outworlders, they are friends. T'Pau lets this non sequitur pass unchallanged.
- -- T'Pring contemptuously orders the (legal?) death of at least one fellow sentient, insults the man she intends to marry, and couldn't care less that she involves uninformed, innocent bystanders in her devious plans.
- -- T'Pau openly shows prejudice, anger, disgust, sarcasm, and sadism towards Spock and the Humans by allowing the ceremony to procede at all and in the manner she orchestrates it and by explaining only when it is too late for Kirk to back out.
- -- A whole collection of Vulcans begin to argue about the course of events and are rudely silenced. This -- and all other orders -- is backed by the threat of force. At the end, Stonn apologizes, but obviously sulks afterward.
- -- T'Pau has the audacity to tell McCoy, "I grieve with thee." She fails to see the contradiction between her behavior and these words. Even odder, these words, however formal, contradict the events of GALILEO SEVEN, where Spock almost causes a mutiny by his refusal to understand and express grief over a death. If there is a word for grieving in the Vulcan language, then they must understand the concept.
- -- Under the guise of logic, T'Pring announces that she has become emotionally involved with Stonn and that they are willing to associate in what amounts to an adulterous relationship regardless of how this would affect Spock, Stonn's intended (if any), or their families. So much for integrity and loyalty.

Since rituals by sheer longevity become illogical, yet are kept because they are comfortably familiar, supplying needed continuity to life, passing judgement on the basis of one ceremony is unfair. We should look at Vulcans under crisis conditions, in situations where rituals and rules don't apply. One such instance is shown us in JOURNEY TO BABEL.

Here we have a father giving his son the "cold, silent treatment." Sarek goes so far as to refuse -- twice, and right in front of Spock's captain -- to accept his son as guide for a tour of the Enterprise. (Sarek later chides Amanda for embarrassing Spock!) We are never told the purpose of this action, if it is normal (ie, a ritual) or a spiteful response to Spock's refusal to follow family tradition. If it is the latter, this is an example of extremely emotional behavior. It would be so even in a Human. Eighteen years is a long time, even for a Vulcan.

The word "embarrassment" also indicates that emotions are possible for the self-professed "unemotional" Vulcans. Sarek does not deny that he takes pride in his son, he also shows impatience when Amanda tells him she loves him, and he smiles slightly when Amanda offers her two fingers. Strange behavior, even in privacy, even for one who must adjust to a human's needs.

It is also interesting that Amanda mentions that, as a boy, Spock had been "fond" of his Sehlat. She may have been interpreting the situation from her own Human upbringing, but in light of the other information, it is revealing that Vulcan's keep pets.

Perhaps Sarek is just worried about Human reactions to his son's ownership of a "giant teddy bear," perhaps he is just trying to bring Spock around through moral persuasion, and perhaps the fact that he and Amanda are speaking English is causing difficulty here, but if so — why the joke at Amanda's expense (in Sickbay)? Surely humor is illogical; Spock does not seem to understand it during his earliest months with Kirk.

### THE GREAT VULCAN SHELL GAME, PART TWO

According to Spock, love and other emotions are considered "bad taste" on Vuican and that he "felt shame" over his friendship with Captain Kirk (THE NAKED TIME). Being half-Human, Spock is somewhat less than reliable on the subject of Vulcan and emotions, tending as he does to overcompensate for his emotions and probably unaware just which of those emotions are of Human origin and which are Vulcan. We cannot even be certain if "shame" is a Vulcan concept. If it is, it most certainly is an emotion-laden concept—and if Vulcan society must apply sanctions to emotions, then those emotions must indeed still be present in most of its members. Why else are they trained throughout childhood to control emotion? Yet even at Gol, the ultimate place of ultimate non-emotion, a rather disdainful T'Sai scornfully rejects. Spock when he fails to achieve kolinahr. Even if such emotions cannot be explained in Human terms (try explaining the sound of a bell in A.S.L [American Sign Language] for the deaf, or snow in some jungle tribal dialect, just for comparison), they evidently do exist, as was seen during the events of AMOK.

TIME and JOURNEY TO BABEL, where fully-Vulcan Vulcans reacted emotionally—or at least illogically, which is Spock's definition of "emotionally"— to important events in their lives.

However unreliable Spock may be on this subject, most of what we, as viewers of the ST universe, know about Vulcans comes from him and events in his life. Thus when Spock returns to ShiKahr as Selek (YESTERYEAR), he passes through gates designed with automatic defense systems to keep carnivores out of the city. But they would also (according to Foster, and thus presumably according to Fontana) immobilize Spock if they found anything "suspicious" about him. Are there Vulcan criminals or renegades hiding in the desert, raiding the cities? Does Vulcan society have other secrets off-worlders haven't discovered yet?

Vulcans, it is said, cannot lie, but Spock most certainly is capable of some whopping white lies. As Selek, he gave his parents an alias, a false relationship, and a false mission. For the Romulans, he invented the Vulcan death grip, accused Kirk of mental instability, and generally brought off a brilliant piece of acting through lying by omission. Actually, Spock acts quite a lot -- playing "super Vulcan" -- and acting is very emotional behavior, even when the person is attempting to act unemotional. In essence, an actor is lying, pretending to be someone he is not. Even if he learned this among Humans, if Vulcan behavior codes are so strongly against lying, Spock should not have been able of bluff that well. Perhaps Dr. McCoy had gone directly to the heart of Spock's problem (BREAD & CIRCUSES): "Every day you stay alive is one more day you might slip ...." Spock was acting Vulcan every day of his life -- living a lie and thus trapped in a massive contradiciton. No wonder he fled to Go!!

Vulcans, as a society, may also be trapped in contradictions, may even be hiding the worst of those from us. As Sandra said, they may not be quite as "nice" as we think. But unless further evidence is forthcoming, we will never know for sure.

### AN IRRITATING GAME OF CHESS

Fairly early in their relationship, Kirk accused Spock of playing "a very irritating game of chess." Undoubtedly, that cut both ways, as Spock was visably annoyed when Kirk escaped near-certain checkmate by checkmating Spock. Kirk used a move Spock could not anticipate because it "wasn't logical." One or the other of them was often mumbling about "calculated risks," "playing poker," or "solutions." They did not, however, always refer to the same things.

Spock seems to have declared war on figurative speech. In fact, he goes out of his way to object to metaphors and similes. When Chekov said that the Klingons were "close enough to smell them," he objected. Any time McCoy Southern-flavored his language, he objected. He called Kirk's "poetry" "non-regulation." He likewise halted Scott's descriptions when he prepared to correct the magnetic flow in the engines. Yet, no matter how silly he sounded, no matter how obvious the figure, he objected to it. At the same time, he uses his pet term "logical" to mean "rational," "level-headed," "controlled," and any number of other things, including a blanket compliment.

Worse, he combines his literal interpretations with obsessive precision. The Enterprise isn't

"lucky," instead "the factor of random chance appears to have operated in our favor." All odds are calculated to the third decimal point. And with a tenacity that drives the often intuitive and impulsive Captain Kirk wild, Spock will explain nothing at all unless directly ordered to "speculate" or he will tell everything he knows on a subject even if the ship is destroyed while he is telling it. Kirk asks for the essentials upon which to base a command decision; Spock believes he nees more than that and gives what to Kirk is trivia. Is this logical behavior?

Often it seems to have been done to relieve tension in Kirk or others of the crew or to express an emotion he dare not admit directly. But to do it when in command of the <u>Galileo 7</u> is foolhardy. Certainly Spock is aware of this, fully capable of deciding when to and when not to indulge in this idiocyncrasy.

Unless it wasn't just an idiocyncrasy. It could be part of a Vulcan's schooling to only speak when the facts are known, to ask as complete a question as possible, and to answer with all information available when asked a question. Modern Vulcan probably has had figurative words or meanings eliminated and in the years since the Reform new words, very precise words, have been added. This would promote logical thought and discourage propaganda, rumors, and other "non-logical" forms of language use (TV commercials, mebbe?) which undoubtedly were used extensively in pre-Reform days. There can be no misunderstanding, no falsification, when a word has but one meaning.

Trust and loyalty lie, then, on telling what you know only when you are certain enough of your facts to be able to speak them properly and completely. Vulcans may find it nearly impossible to "speculate," hence Spock's resistance to do it in English until Kirk orders it. He may also hold back because opinions are given on Vulcan only when asked for — if the facts are known, everyone can draw the conclusion; it would be insulting to state the obvious.

Evidently Kirk understands some of this and behaves accordingly. His patience is probably one of the things which keeps him in the game with Spock when other Humans have been found wanting.

## YES, SIR (DOCTOR MOTHER HEN)

It is an established fact that Dr. Leonard McCoy had to constantly hover over Captain Jim Kirk: changing the diet card, serving as bartender, ordering physicals (and exercise), patching the captain back together again during and after missions, shore leaves, and love affairs. When Admiral Kirk hijacked, er, regained command of the Enterprise, Dr. Christine Chapel was the Chief Medical Officer. What might have happened if Dr. McCoy had not returned to the Enterprise or the Vejur mission?

Certainly Chapel's job was both simplified and complicated by a new device, the person. Supposedly, all necessary data on the captain was immediately available to the CMO by pushing a button or whatever. All changes in Kirk's physical or emotional state were thus recorded, supplying cold hard data upon which to judge the captain's fitness for command. It was now also much easier for those flying desks to assume they knew all there was to know about any situation under their review. However, Human factors a machine cannot record still have to be taken into consideration, making it harder for any CMO to justify "argu(ing) with the computer."

Harder still would be arguing with the Captain. Kirk-the-chauvinist would be difficult to control despite the obvious respect he displayed toward Chapel during the five year mission. Kirk would not want her along on dangerous missions, any attempt to elicit information Kirk was uncomfortable telling to a woman would be considere prying (at best), she would have to choose her words very carefully when it became necessary to "throw the book" at the captain. Uhura may be able to snarl back at Kirk, but Chapel had never been in close working contact with him. On the other hand, she isn't a newcomer able to establish a working relationship as CMO-Captain; he will keep thinking of her as "nurse." Rank might also prove a difficulty, as she is a lieutenant and he a former (?) admiral.

More interesting still but harder to speculate about would be the effect should have on the Kirk-Spock relationship, whether or not she is still interested in Spock. If would be difficult for her to become the counterweight McCoy was. Certainly she would try; she would have to be pretty stupid to not realize what McCoy had been doing. Both men, however, would misinterpret her goals, continuing to think about her "love" for Spock instead of her duty to both and to the ship and its crew. But, as we do not know what form the new Kirk-Spock-McCoy triangle will assume, it cannot really be speculated what a Kirk-Spock partnership would have developed into and how it and Chapel would have coexisted. Certainly life would have been fascinating.

## WHO'S (ELIGIBLE TO BE) ON FIRST?

The question has often been raised in fandom as to why Uhura never gets to sit in the center seat. To answer that one must first know how a person gets assigned to a position on a starship. Obviously, not everyone has to go to Starfleet Academy. As Dr. McCoy was not there (he was the only one on the bridge completely unaware of the "dunsel" tradition), medical personnel may be exempt, the course may be taken by correspondence, or credit is given for training and experience elsewhere. Perhaps other fields have similar policies, fields such as xeno-psychology, socio-history, or inter-spacial physics, where military training is of lesser importance than scientific skills. Most likely only those who hope to rise above a certain grade, such as lieutenant, and/or only in departments such as command and security are required to attend the Academy in person.

Uhura, then , may never have gone to Starfleet Academy. Given her great knowledgeability of the ship, however, it is more likely that she did graduate from there, but never went on to (or never finished) Command School. Thus, as long as someone on the bridge had formal command training, she is not called upon to "take the con," no matter how much knowledge and talent she displays. She simply is not certified "one of the boys."

## RULE, BRITANNIA: A PET PEEVE

If it weren't for Uhura, Sulu, and Chekov, Kirk, Scott, McCoy, Riley, Kyle, and Chapel would make the old Enterprise not only 99.9977% (1/430) Human but also something like 60% descended from residents of the British Isles. One Mr. Evans was black and may or may not have had a white ancestor, "Johnson" can be originally Scandinavian, but the point still holds: it was too easy for the writers to say, "Name? Ah ... Fields. That's good enough. He only has three lines." Some of the crew with more lines or multiple appearances acquired names of other European origins: DeSalle (Franch), Gaetano (Italian), or Kelowitz (probably Polish). The Germans, for all their notable scientific and engineering skills, were represented mainly by Karl Jaeger, who was straight man for one of Trelane's Jokes, the huge Spanish-speaking segment of our planet was likewise almost totally ignored, and the Middle East never got anyone at all.

I find it very hard to believe that no Chinese qualified for the Enterprise. Sheer weight of numbers guarantees that (a) many Terrans will be of Chinese ancestry, and (b) some Humans of Chinese ancestry will be interested in space exploration, no matter what past historical trends continue into the future. The same holds true for the Indian sub-continent and Africa south of the Sahara. (Given the latter's relatively small percentage of Earth's total population at present, the Enterprise's crew may correctly reflect trends.)

I will also grant that English is taking over the planet. Thanks to the British Empire and American cultural dominance, people are naming their sons Ringo Starr (Yamamoto) and their daughters Bo Derek (Rodriguez). Emigration has altered names, as has colonization: Wong Kwan Juen to June Wong or, in my own family, Wodkowski to Woods, so as to appear more American or Australian or whatever. The classic example is the British royal family [Ed: "Windsor" was Saxe-Coburg-Gotha; "Mountbatten" was Battenberg]. However, if Scotty and Chekov are any example, there is also a resurgence of nationalism. Some families may have returned to the older names.

I will even concede that GR et al had to make the crew palatable to audiences of the late '60's. However, I do not understand why fan writers of the late 1970's and early '80's have to continue the practice. No matter how atypical the <u>Enterprise</u> may be, if Starfleet is truly interested in the ideals of the Federation, the imbalance should correct itself. This seems to have happened; the new crew is more mixed. Stories should have more of the names that are evident in any big city telephone directory and in the NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC.

Writers should not excuse themselves by saying that they write about people they know. If they don't understand the cultures on their own planet, how can they write about all the peoples of the Twenty-Third Century? (Perhaps that reasoning explains why I once saw a story draft with a Klingon scientist who has an obviously English name.) And it is not too difficult to change Joe to Jose or Cathy to Ekaterina — at least. What I'd really like to see is stories from the POV of a Hsiang Rue Villalobos or a Fatima Diamatopoulos. With cultural background like that, I'll bet they're mighty interesting people.

### LEFT HIGH AND DRY

The <u>Galileo</u> and its sister shuttlecraft were first mentioned in THE CONSCIENCE OF THE KING and first seen in THE GALLILEO SEVEN. Obviously, GR simply hadn't thought of the shuttlecraft before those shows, but in the universe of Star Trek itself there has to be a reasonable explanation as to why they weren't

even mentioned, much less used in such episodes as THE ENEMY WITHIN. (Certainly the quality of "room service" would have improved if Spock could have sent Sulu a shuttle full of rice wine.) Did all the craft have out-of-order signs on them, or were they so new that the ship only had one untested craft? Perhaps the shuttle-bay doors were broken or the airlocks malfunctioning — and this was common knowledge. But surely at least Dr. McCoy would have complained about the lousy timing, making such explanations very unsatisfactory. Likewise, untested or not, Kirk or Spock would have sent a shuttlecraft to rescue Sulu and his men. Or Scott would have found a way to repair the machinery in his usual efficient manner. What really happened that the shuttlecraft weren't considered?

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### WAITING FOR A LIFT

When a red alert is sounded, all crewmembers are expected to report to their stations as quickly as possible. This means that, if no yellow alert has been called earlier, two-thirds of the ship is on the move at the same time — most of them having to wait for an elevator to take them to the proper deck. How does the system handle the load? And how does everyone manage to be at their post in something under a minute?

For that matter, what do the people in definitely non-combat jobs do during an alert? A dietician, historian, or transporter operator doesn't have work normally related to fighting or the support roles of data gathering and analysis and damage control. Is such a person cross-trained in physics or mechanical engineering? Are all the security guards automatically also paramedics or experts in effecting temporary repairs to bulkheads?

Similarly, one purpose of a red alert is to triple—man all stations so that the incapacitation of one crewmember does not render the station useless. This should include the bridge, yet we very seldom see anyone around capable of taking over in an emergency. Were they on the auxiliary bridge, the likely place? If so, Spock or Scott should have been there also so that in the event that the bridge was completely destroyed, a command grade officer would still be available. That obviously was the reason for an auxiliary bridge in the first place; the main bridge is in a highly vulnerable position "atop" the ship, its unbraced roof quite fragile in comparison to the rest of the starship. Wasn't Kirk neglecting the safety of the Enterprise by not splitting up his valuable personnel?

### WHO'S (ELIGIBLE TO BE) ON FIRST? AN ADDITIONAL THOUGHT

In WHAT ARE LITTLE GIRLS MADE OF there is a broad suggestion that Commander Spock too may not have attended Starfleet Academy. Near the beginning, Spock is telling Kirk about the importance of Roger Korby to science when the captain interrupts, "Required reading at the Academy, Mr. Spock." Now if Spock had spent the normal amount of time at Starfleet Academy, Kirk probably would not have used the tone he did; a hint of laughter would have been in his voice instead of yes-Spock-I-know-all-that. So our favorite Vulcan probably only went to Command School.

How does this fit into the image of Spock not speaking to Sarek for eighteen long years? Quite well, actually, for in JOURNEY TO BABEL Sarek says only, "He chose to devote his knowledge to Starfleet..."

Starfleet. There is no mention of Starfleet academy. Spock could easily have attended the Vulcan Science Academy and then refused to stay on as instructor and researcher. Starfleet, perhaps seeking to encourage participation by Vulcans, may have offered Spock the opportunity to attend command school with the promise of a lieutenant's rank and a science officer's position upon graduation. Indeed, this may have been suggested to Starfleet by one of Spock's own instructors, who realized that he was uncomfortable on Vulcan or saw that he had certain abilities and skills valuable in space and wasted on Vulcan.

### MUSAK OF THE ...

Do Federation starships have their equivalent of Muzak to help the crews work more efficiently? We never hear any evidence of such, so if there is, it must be subliminal so as not to interfere with the communications system.

Obviously, there is a monumental problem of what to play. Even if the ship's crew is entirely from one planet, it has to be decided if the computer should be programmed with folksongs, classic songs, current "hits," or classical music, to name only a few options — and what proportions of each will be used in each area of the ship. After all, music which might keep a security guard alert could disrupt a delicate scientific experiment. Personal quarters certainly could have the music of the occupant's own preference, but in Sickbay it would generally have to be restful, and on the bridge highly motivational.

But what motivates a Kevin Riley may not appeal to a James Kirk.

On ships of mixed planet origin or mixed species, the problem is even more difficult as each group must hear music from its own planet. What to an Andorian sounds like a brisk dance tune may to a Betel-quusian seem like a caterwaul.

Perhaps sounds and smells would be used instead of music to enchance work, sleep, eating, meditation, etc, programmed minute by minute, varying with the area or even the individual room of the ship. A certain pure tone might help a Vulcan to meditate, the faint scent of flowers might relax a weary Human. March beats might induce Andorians to perform their duties more effectively. Who knows what today's crude attempts to influence peoples' behavior might evolve into by that time. On small ships on extended voyages, what we consider offensive might be essential to the sanity of the crews.

WHO'S (ELIGIBLE TO BE) ON FIRST: AN ADDITIONAL THOUGHT ON THE ADDITIONAL THOUGHT

Spock served under Christopher Pike for eleven years, four months, and five days (plus an odd number of hours and minutes), according to Spock himself. The events on Talos IV occured thirteen years before Spock spirited Pike off Starbase 11. Not so very much later (Stardate 3012.4 to 3842.3), it is learned that Spock and his father have not properly spoken to each other for over eighteen years. Several interesting ideas present themselves.

Spock has been on the Enterprise at least thirteen years, probably more like fourteen or fifteen (because he seems at ease in Pike's company). Based on traditional historical Earth military procedures, this is a very long time — especially early in a career. Perhaps this customary rotation is less used by Starfleet because they have other methods of training personnel and locating ability where the need is greatest, perhaps captains can demand that certain key personnel stay on their starships, perhaps officers have some say about where they are stationed, or perhaps Spock has some unusual clause in his "contract." (Could it be nobody wanted to try working with a Vulcan and even the Intrepid didn't want him? Starfleet isn't a 100% military organization, so anything is possible.) If any of the first three possibilities are true, it could also explain why so many other officers on the Enterprise have been around so long — and keep returning after each tour of duty has ended. It might (repeat, might) explain why Kirk gets away with "running away to sea" instead of remaining at his desk job. It was Irregular behavior, but there's nothing specifically against it in the rulebook.

At any rate, assuming that the eighteen years date marks the beginning of Spock's life in Starfleet, where is he for the three to five years we know nothing about? Command School, of course, but was he also at Starfleet Academy? Was he stationed on Earth for a time, or Berengaria VII? On some ship other than the <a href="Enterprise">Enterprise</a>? And who besides Pike and Leila Kalomi entered his life during all those years before the five year mission?

### READY FOR ANYTHING

On the planet Delta Vega (WHERE NO MAN...), why is there a security room when the station is meant to be uninhabited and only visited once every twenty-five years (or whatever)? Probably there should be no room at all with a bed, as visiting engineers could rest aboard their own ship. There might be a lounge for "coffee breaks," but private quarters or a complete security cell is unlikely.

### SOMETHING OUT OF NOTHING

Where did the extra matter for the doubles come from in THE ENEMY WITHIN? The transporter is designed to transform matter into its basic molecular structure, beam it to another location, and reconstruct it into its former state, not make something out of nothing. Yet it created a second animal body, a second Kirk body, and unknown quantities of test objects. Did the molecular matter come from the planet's surface? If so, they may have invented a great way to resupply themselves with food and dilithium crystals!

### TEA FOR TWO

Can/Do Vulcans have twins? Granted, they are only touch telepaths, but there must be certain difficulties for the people involved in a twinning situation, especially if the telepathic ability develops along with the baby's brain. Probably it does not, for the expectant mother would be constantly inundated with uncontrolled thoughts, and the infant with complicated thinking for which it is not prepared. On the other hand, it would be the perfect time to teach a new mind the basics of its existance and would

explain why Vulcan children are (probably) more advanced than their Human counterparts. It would make life rather complicated for a mother of twins, however.

After birth, fraternal twins would generally function no differently from normal siblings, despite having had their minds in close proximity for nine (?) months. Identical twins, though, would have <a href="Identical">Identical</a> twins, though, would have <a href="Identical">Identical</a> minds. Would they have complete telepathy at all times, sort of an automatic bonding, requiring extensive training before they could function independently? Even that might not be possible and Vulcan society has had to find a place for two people forced by biology to pursue the same careers and live in close proximity to each other.

If Vulcans are lucky, twins died out or science found a way to prevent the birth of twins. Otherwise, whatever did they do during pon farr? Two women with one man would be tolerable, but two men and one poor woman ....

### GUESS WHO CAME TO DINNER

Evidently bogus tapes are rather easy to make. Not only did Spock fake messages by Captain Kirk (THE MENAGERIE) but the Gorn ship which lured the <u>Enterprise</u> to Cestus III not only overcame all the obstacles that ship's first officer faced but also surmounted an incredible language barrier and a cultural information barrier as well.

The Gorn were probably a martial people, experts in personal combat, as evidenced by the uniform which left the arms and legs free to move and provided little surface an opponent could grab, the immediate creation of a knife (though with those teeth, why invent a knife)! There was the tendency to fight first and ask questions never, and the Metron's comment that the Gorn commander definitely would have killed Kirk. Such a people have little interest in science when it does not advance military competency; a universal translator is of great use to diplomats but only of limited use to the military. Its only real use would be to eavesdrop on the enemy camp. There are other ways to get the same basic information. Curious though, that the Gorn did not recognize the basic ingredients of gunpowder. Was it never invented on their planet?

### DEATH WISH?

Basically, Kirk is an excellent leader. Upon occasion, however, he has definite problems with delegating authority. More than once he has breathed down Spock's neck as if trying to hurry the sensors along, and he has repeatedly tried helm, navigation, and communications controls after their operators have indicated that those controls were useless. This behavior mainly shows a fundamental impatience with the world in general. But then there are landing parties.

Undoubtedly there have been hundreds of dull, routine landings Kirk has willingly delegated to the proper departments. But he has difficulty restraining himself from going along on any mission which gives even the faintest whiff of being intereeting. On detail, he does not have to appoint himself grenade launcher (ARENA) or chief investigator (DEVIL IN THE DARK, PATTERNS OF FORCE, etc, etc). Again, he is impatient and he has a deep need to be DOING. But underneath, adding further impetus, is an urge to not grow old. Old implies being inactive, grounded, perhaps even invalided, which Kirk positively abhors (THE DEADLY YEARS). The only way to keep from growing old is to die young. And if one must die young, what better way than to die for something, or when saving someone? It's obvious that, given a choice, Kirk would rather sacrifice himself than a crewmember; his subconscious fear of being old only adds to that desire.

### **BOTANY BAY REBORN**

Khan Noonian Singh, Lieutenant Marla McGivers, and seventy-two other "colonists" were deposited on Ceti Alpha V along with whatever equipment was salvaged from their ship. Then the Enterprise up and left them to whatever fate they could devise. Or so it would seem.

However, Captain Kirk had to file a report with starfleet. No matter how benevolent Starfleet might be, it is still a bureaucracy and bureaucracies do not leave colonies alone unless they have to. Khan's group qualifies as a colony, so there's no reason for a "hands off" policy, even though Kirk might argue for such a policy in the hope that the group would simply die out. Within a standard year, somebody was there offering assistance.

Undoubtedly, most assistance was refused, but basic tools, medical supplies, and electronics equipment were probably accepted. Khan was realist enough to know that such items were necessary and that Starfleet wasn't going to simply go away. He would have appeased them by accepting certain vital

materials and then emphatically declining offers of technical advisory assistance. After all, every one of their number was a highly trained person. Since, as we have seen, colonies appear to be left alone for years at a time if there is good reason, this compromise would be accepted.

What would have happened during those earliest years? It was a harsh planet, dry and hot. Work would have had to be done during the early morning and evening hours. Most likely the Enterprise set them down near a water supply, but there would still be a desperate struggle to erect suitable shelter, for safety against everything from insects to huge predators, and for edible foodstuffs, both hunted and farmed. Khan had many diffiucit decisions to make. Was he successful or will we meet him after he calls for assistance? More than one of the new characters are scientists at Space Laborator Regula One. Is their presence needed on Ceti Alpha V?

There is also a Starfleet Commander on a top secret exploratory mission. Have the Klingons or Romulans been observed in the neighborhood? The former would have to be a very recent event, for the Klingons would sood find that Khan's group wasn't about to become slaves to mere Klingons and would be waging a war of extermination against them. The Romulans, being more inventive, would probably not kill them but rather find some way to use such intellectually and physically powerful people. Khan's people wish to rule, after all, so what better way to expand the Romulan Empire than by letting the Botany Bay exiles rule — for a while. They probably would get more than they bargained for — such as ending up being used themselves. It will most definitely be interesting to find out what has happened.

What we probably will never know is what happened to McGivers, the Enterprise historian who accompanied Khan. Unless she had unsuspected resources of strength, she really was not much use to people colonizing a harsh planet. She could assist with the formalities of organizing a government and the society in general, but it would be years before such would be needed. And she would record the events fo the establishment of the colony, but otherwise, she was just one extra mouth to feed whenever she wasn't making babies, a rather harsh reality after her romantic dreams. With only thirty-one women to forty-three men ....

After the children were born in sufficient numbers, McGivers could function as a teacher of the younger ones, using the information stored in the Botany Bay's computers (if salvaged, of course) as supplemental aids, and writing further books as necessary. Depending upon how much her hero-worshiping view of the past corresponded with Khan's, she may or may not have been free to instruct in her own way. Probably she was told what to teach and how.

For undoubtedly, the breeding program begun on Earth was continued. And if so, they would also continue the tyranny set up on Earth. With no "normal" Humans to control except McGivers, the supermen would have to control each other. The children are the logical starting place — with a rigid physical and mental testing system to separate the best from the rest. This would begin as soon as minimum survival functions had been established and, indeed, would be considered part of "survival."

How we find Khan's group then depends upon the length of time passed since they were left on Ceti Alpha V. Given twenty years, they should have one generation raised to near adulthood, an even larger group of children severely trained who will be the expanders of a society crystalizing around a series of decrees issued by Khan as the basic problems of survival are confronted and solved. The society is undoubtedly far from secure, but it has undoubtedly made great strides and would be far more stable than the average colonial establishment of that age. Unless, of course, quarrels over food, women, and "sayso" has torn the group into tiny factions.

[Ed. note: this column was written in early 1982, months before the premiere of STAR TREK: THE WRATH OF KHAN, and is based entirely on speculation]

#### WHAT THE FUTURE MAY REMEMBER

The "Mary Sue" story isn't the only way fan writers interject our present into the time-line of the Federation and the USS Enterprise. All sorts of customs, personalities, and events are alluded to, and quotations from popular songs abound. This is all well and good, but if writers are to guarantee the "authenticity" of their ST universe, they had best be careful to whom and what they refer.

It has been established that during the 1990's a third world war occured: the Eugenics War. Many valuable records were lost, not only about that period but also about previous years and centuries. That which survived the bonbings, lootings, and general destruction would have to be special and/or lucky.

In the first category are most historical records, museum holdings, and published materials of

limited distribution. In the second category is everything from a sing-along book to a pot-bellied stove. But notice that for both categories the important word is "luck." Don't expect the Peking Museum or the motion picture archives in LA to survive; major cities would suffer extensive rioting and perhaps be saturation bombed. Some individual items might be saved if managers with foresight found a way to hide the British Museum's original Gutenburg Bible or the Metropolitan Opera's library of taped performances in Antarctica. Duplicate government records are being stored in caves and mines all over the world, but I doubt the Library of Congress has a second collection anywhere — even on microfilm — of its millions of volumes.

Most local libraries will have copies of common books such as BEN HUR, and they might very well be spared bombings and even book burnings, but will they also survive night after winter night without fuel for heating or cooking? Works of art stand a better chance after the battling ends, but how many famous works are currently located in isolated towns or estates? Songs have a life quite independent of books and records, but the story writer still has to decide if a song is of the type that tired, hungry, and probably ill survivors would care to remember. Does it have a folksy, peppy tune, humorous, uplifting, or bawdy lyrics? Is it a melancholy ballad so depressing it cheers up the singer? Could be it survived.

Whatever history is remembered will be of a similar nature as the songs and, most likely, consist of either personal moments or great, monumental events. A lot of everything in between, which is most of history, would be lost along with the books and records. Exactly how much depends upon how much of the planet becomes a battlefield and how long the post-recovery period lasts. If this is the period when Earth finally unified, perhaps the length of time books, works of art, etc lay buried deep in rubble was limited. Obviously, the shorter the period, the less was destroyed by looting, fire, and water, and the more dud up as the cities and towns were reclaimed.

At first, however, most of the reclaimers would be mainly interested in medicine, engineering, practical science: everything from building homes to launching communication satellites. Only certain cities would place a high priority on the arts and letters, places such as Oxford and Vienna. I would guess that Earth was rebuilt at a furious pace — which can only mean that luck was on the side of culture. Those books and centers of learning and scientific experimentation did survive in sufficient amounts to permit such rapid recovery (all the desire in the world ain't enough if the know-how ain't there).

So when you want to quote your current favorite pop tune/bestselling novel/standard whatever of recent decades, consider this: is that work one which you, in 1995, would deem important enough to take with you into a bomb shelter or on a frantic dash to a rural hideaway? Would you remember it on a march to destroy the stronghold of a superman ruler? Is it so important you would give up extra food or water to have with you, or would brave a journey of several hundred miles to smuggle it to safety? If so, then go ahead and quote it or mention it — it probably is something which did survive the Eugenics Wars, because of popularity coupled with luck or because someone like you in Star Trek's universe did indeed treasure it despite the dangers, hardships, and fears.

#### DEAR MR. BENNETT: NOTES AND VIEWS ON THE WRATH OF KHAN (PART ONE)

May the Great Bird of the Galaxy smile on your endeavors forever. STAR TREK II, from the first note of music to the last, is pure Trek and one mighty fine motion picture besides. It has themes with which all viewers can identify, it has probably the finest art and optical work seen anywhere, and the acting can only be described as inspired. The use of the two quotations from Melville's MOBY DICK (readers see below) gave to the role of Khan a special terribleness.

There is one major continuity error, however, or did you all think we wouldn't mind? Pavel Chekov was not aboard the Enterprise at the time of SPACE SEED. Walter Koenig joined the series early in the second season, while that episode was filmed in the middle of the first season.

But you do say that Khan remembers Chekov. That means he was indeed aboard and we simply were unaware of his presence. Most likely he had just been assigned to the ship and was proving himself down in the science Department so that he could also serve as back-up to Mr. Spock at the bridge science station. Perhaps it was in one of the labs that this brash, self-confident young ensign came to Khan's attention. Or it could simply have happened in one of the rec rooms while Pavel told one of his tall tales about Mother Russia.

Less easy to explain is how Chekov knew all about Khan; he was not near the center of action. The bridge officers must have been free to supply the grapevine with information. Of course, if Chekov had already befriended Sulu, the helmsman would have willingly furnished all the details. Starfleet may have been ill-informed about Khan, but the Enterprise crew obviously was not!

Perhaps using Chekov was not such a serious blunder after all. My other major complaints turn out to be mere quibbles: (1) There should have been a few more lines of interplay between Saavik and Spock informing the viewers about her heritage, (2) it should have been made clear when Peter Preston died that he was Scotty's nephew, and (3) the scene between Kirk, McCoy and Spock after listening to Carol Marcus's report looks forced. A smug half-smile from Spock would have avoided the problem entirely.

The best part of the movie for me? That's a difficult one in the face of so much that was well done. I certainly will say this: if Ricardo Montalban doesn't get an Oscar nomination for Khan, there ain't no justice. My test of whether or not a piece of acting is great is: Can I completely forget actor Q and all his previous roles and see only the character present? If so, that's Acting. At no time did I disbelieve that Khan was anybody other than the man saved from eventual death on the Botany Bay some fifteen years previous. He was every bit as arrogant and self-righteous as in SPACE SEED, with the same mannerisms of hand and head. His madness is a splendid madness, larger than life even as the man is, skirting but never slipping over the edge into overblown theatrics.

(Mostly this is Montalban's own great talent at work, but also it is a great part. If several of his lines seem somehow familiar, it could be because the top book in his shelf was Herman Melville's MOBY DICK. The first great quote is from Chapter XXVI, about half-way through, a paraphrase of the original being: "I...!'ll chase him round Good Hope and round the Horn, and round the Norway Maelstrom, and round perdition's flames before I give him up." "Him" in that case is the great white whale. The second quote is exact, given in two parts in ST2, but is continuous in the last chapter of MBY DICK: "To the last I grapple with thee; from hell's heart I stab at thee; for hate's sake I spit my last breath at thee." Fantastic.)

#### NOTES AND VIEWS ON THE WRATH OF KHAN (PART TWO)

Next movie, could Uhura and Sulu have something do do? At the very least, could it seem like they have done something to earn their rank of commander? If Chekov has risen to be first officer, surely Sulu has managed a similar position. If he and Uhura are at Headquarters, couldn't that have been mentioned? By now Uhura would either have taken a position of responsibility at HQ or be teaching at the Academy, rather than be taking another tour of duty as Communications Officer on the Enterprise. Yet, from the way she objected to Kirk's remark that space was for the young, opening hailing frequencies is still her primary job. As for Sulu, it was impossible to tell what he is/was doing, except that he does not seem to be part of the Enterprise's regular crew. Would you let us see more of their lives, please?

For that matter, what was McCoy doing in the simulator? Since ship's doctors aren't really supposed to be hanging around the bridge, he had no business being inside the simulator. If his job is to observe the mental fitness of the cadets, he should have been viewing the proceedings with Kirk through the camera or one-way mirrors.

And what on Earth is Kirk's job?

#### SIGNS AND SYMBOLS: GLASSES

(Ignoring the obvious question of why Kirk wasn't fitted with contanct lenses.) One pair of granny glasses: another antique for the collection, an aid to less-than-perfect eyesight, and a symbol. Wake up, Jim Kirk, you're not ready to be an antique in your growing collection, so I'm going to shock you. That's all the glasses were meant to mean when McCoy gave them as a birthday gift. Events turned them into a symbol of mortality, frailty, and dependency. Kirk was embarrassed when he had to put them on in front of the young Saavik. His look defied her to say or even think anything. He hid them from Khan the superman lest he be thought less of than he had been fifteen years previous. Kirk found them broken after Spock's death (how?) and only a short while later says he feels young. Broken glasses, broken dreams, but also a break with his self-pity and morbidity. No longer will he sit at Starfleet Headquarters collecting antiques, feeling his day is past. He'll find a way to get back out in space, he'll keep his youthful frame-of-mind, eagerly searching for all that is new and true, lesson learned teh hard way that age is not a barrier to accomplishment when even death is not.

#### LO, THE ALL-KNOWING COMPUTER

How come the Enterprise computer had a list of prefix codes? Do all ship's computers have this information, just starships in certain classes, or is it unique to the Enterprise? If all/most ships have the information, perhaps it is because, after the near-disastrous incident with the M-5 computer, it was deemed necessary to be able to control a ship if it or its personnel went crazy. Perhaps some

ship's crew did just that in the recent past and destroyed a starbase or an outpost.

That the information is available to all or most ships is certainly more believable than the alternative, despite the possibility that the enemy may capture the information. The codes are probably changed periodically, as are the radio codes. But if it is unique to the Enterprise, this makes the ship far more important than it seems. Is it to be a flagship? There would be no point in having such data aboard a training ship if it were not to be used on a regular cruise. The Enterprise is not specifically the Admiral's ship, so the data must not be reserved for top-echelon personnel and ships only.

#### TO HIDE OR NOT: AN OPINION

A popular device in fan fiction is the chess alcove. In the story "Surprise!" (by Nichelle Nichols in STAR TREK: THE NEW YOYAGES II), Nichols, Marshak, and Culbreath assume that the published <u>Enterprise</u> blueprints are correct and that there is an access corridor between Kirk's and Spock's staterooms. Doors from their respective bathrooms open onto it. As a birthday gift, Spock has the area walled off, forming a private room. The two officers may then play chess undisturbed and leave unfinished games to be resumed at a future time. Of course, all sorts of fascinating incidents occur in and around that nifty alcove.

The question is, would Captain Kirk customarily play chess in such a place? If Spock is teaching Kirk a difficult new game strategy, perhaps. But the purpose of those matches is not just for Kirk to sharpen his wits against Spock, not just for recreation in his off-hours, but also to be among the crew, testing their mood, learning about them by overhearing their conversations and comments and by observing their behavior. The matches also provide entertainment for the crew and the resulting "humanization" of their captain and first officer probably increases the loyalty to those two men. It certainly decreases gripes about snobbish, uncaring senior officers.

Therefore, unless it is a very special match, such as the grand master contest described in "Surprise!", it is highly unlikely that Kirk and Spock would hide themselves away in a private room for hours on end. That would give cause for all sorts of speculation aboard ship — none of it healthy.

i read a story just the other day which took place on the new Enterprise -- and the chess alcove was still there. Can someone please explain how?!

#### THE ONE-EYED MAN IS KING -- AND OTHER MUSINGS

Almost all Mensans and most SF fans know what it is like to not fit in. They march to a different beat than the rest of society and quickly tire of the duliness of much of what passes for conversation and entertainment. Pity poor Spock.

Spock can do differential calculus in his head while even the brightest among us depend upon calculators for all but 52 + 49. How can he wait so patiently for those around him to calculate what flashes whole into his mind?

Spock has to sit at meetings and discussions waiting for his staff and his fellow officers to digest information he has drawn conclusions on long before. How can he wait so patiently through what must be hours of boredom?

Spock has to tolerate emotional outbursts, tortured logic, cliches, puns, an assortment of holiday customs (can you imagine what he would think of Ground Hog Day!), practical jokes, cocktail parties/receptions — and shore leaves.

Spock is rather in the position of the Mensan in a home for the retarded or, at least of the master's degreed teacher in a kindergarten.

How does Spock get enough intellectual stimulation? Reading, playing chess, self-testing can only do so much to keep wits sharp; contact with another mind of equal or greater ability sooner or later becomes a necessity. The computer is no substitute. For all its talents, it is not creative.

If Spock were not Spock but any of a few billion other people, he would have simply taken over by now. Yet never to our knowledge does he pronounce his intellectual and physical superiority (although he does come close in GALILEO SEVEN) and "take charge" as the RomCom thought he should. Is it Vulcan pacifism or his own personality? Is it his respect for Kirk?

For that matter, why doesn't he leave the <a href="Enterprise">Enterprise</a>? Surely he has enough reasons to beyond the the intellectual differences. Life must be torture. He must be continuously cold, noises must always be too loud, he lives in fear of being touched physically or emotionally, he has to shield his mind against the emotional atmosphere surrounding him, and he can never utilize his full strength whether restraining Kirk or flipping a switch on a machine built to Human tolerances. He must occasionally experience claustrophobia after being raised on a desert planet and has to reconcile his inheritance of Vulcan respect

for privacy with Human curiosity and Starfleet Regulations. is it really any wonder that, as Dr. McCoy said in BREAD AND CIRCUSES: "I know why you're not afraid to die, Spock. You're more afraid of living. Each day you stay alive is just one more day you might slip ...."

Is it perhaps all due to something a bit bizarre, such as (a) the Vulcans have set themselves a task — to "mellow" the Human race, (b) Spock is an experiment to see if vitality can be bred back into the dying Vulcan race?

#### (IN)SUFFICIENT DATA

Fifteen years ago they were pure fantasy — or close enough to it that there was no apparent difference. Now maybe, just maybe, they are possible: the Teacher machine and the alien machine which transferred Kirk and Lester, the transporter, and ... Spock.

One estimate places the number of bits necessary to describe the Human mind and its atcivity at 10 or approximately the content of the Library of Congress. Add the same amount for the brain's accumulated memories and you have an idea of the enormity of the problem of mind transfer. With a combination of a process called "Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Tomography" and a lot of fancy gadgets, an electronic/magnetic "picture" of the brain could be made and by means of helmets which focus the data, transfer everything to a second brain. The technology is possible, the limiting factor is our lack of knowledge about the brain and how it remembers [ref. "The Feasability of Mind Transfer" by Tom Rainbow, Ph. D, isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine, June 1983].

The Teacher was merely a computer which stored brain patterns, recorded from a brain at an earlier time and filed until needed. If mind-to-mind transfer is technologically possible now, the added step of storing the information should be no problem; computers currently store all types of electronically produced data. The life-entity transfer machine Janice Lester discovered was able to swap brain patterns and sould of the persons involved. A good case could be made that a person's collective memories are his "soul," his personality, and his life force, but Spock was unaware that it had ever been accomplished with mechanical means, so it must be a more sophisticated process.

Since the transporter disassembles and reassembles memories along with the body, it has to contain some sort of mind transfer machine -- which leads to a bit of a paradox (I think James Blish used this first): it is a given that Lester's transfer is the first, are all the people who have used a transporter then without souls? If they have souls, Lester's find is hardly unique. Perhaps it is the dual transfer which has never been done before.

The Kinsey report documents that interspecies copulation can — and does — occur. Thus it is possible that Humans and aliens will become mates as long as their sex organs are even roughly Human in shape. Whether or not a child could be produced is an unknown because the nature of the alien is unknown. At the Grant Park Zoo, a male gibbon (44 chromosomes) and a female siamang (50) produced offspring (47) in 1975, so it can happen naturally on Earth. If a lot of complicated things like amino acids and proteins are formed the same way on both planets of origin, it would be possible to produce a child. But — the odds are astronomical against evolution proceding in just that way Iref. "Alien Sex" by Dr. Robert A. Frietas, Jr, Analog, June 19821.

Artificially created children are a better bet. It is possible today to cross highly unrelated plants (soybean and barley) and even plants and animals, although in the latter case, nothing except cell colonies have yet been grown [ref. "Stocking the Galley of Spaceship Earth" by Mark S. Lesney, Ph. D, Analog, May 1982]. With two hundred years of Human scientific research in genetic engineering plus unknown years of Vulcans (etc) delving into the problems, it is altogether possible that someone like Spock could be one day.

#### TO SPEAK OF CABBAGES

In any episode, the principle command officers are on the bridge during a red alert. If the bridge is destroyed and the crew killed, who assumes command?

How long is .1 -- as in Stardate 7412.1?

How did Kirk learn to be a pickpocket?

in ALL OUR YESTERDAYS, what happened to those people who didn't want to return to some part of Sarpeidon's past? Were they all rounded up and arbitrarily sent to certain years?

If two people remembered the atavachron, why couldn't others, and so change the planet's history? Was it the job of the prosecutor for the inquisition to help newcomers adjust quickly and to eliminate them if they could not?

In AMOK TIME, would a wedding not be a formal enough occasion to warrant dress uniforms?
In BALANCE OF TERROR, Spock speaks of the "Earth-Romulan conflict of over a century ago."
Does "Earth" mean just that, or is he using it because Terrans supplied the Federation most of the ships and men? Just how old is the Federation, anyway?

What kind of settlement is the planet in THE CLOUD MINDERS? They've lived there long enough to develop a complex and polarized society full of racial and/or social prejudice; the people, we are told, are "all the same species;" yet Plasus has one guard with very black skin. Where did he come from?

Why did Vanna in THE CLOUD MINDERS say that they would die in the cave from lack of air when she knew they could transport out at any time. They did beam in, after all.

How much of what kind of power is used to hold up Stratos City?

Why does Spock playing chess and winning prove that the ship's log has been altered in COURT MARTIAL? These are separate programs; if they were not, other systems would also have been muddled and have alerted the crew that the log had been tampered with. What exactly was Finney's job? Was he Uhura's superior officer?

in DAGGER OF THE MIND, if the neural neutralizer was aimed at the chair, how did first Kirk and then Dr. Adams feel its effects from the floor of the "treatment" room?

in THE DEADLY YEARS, how could the hormone injection restore hair and hair color in only a few minutes?

At one point in THE ENEMY WITHIN, Spock announces himself as "Second Officer Spock." Wasn't he First Officer at that point?

What does the Swahili in THE MAN TRAP translate to?

in THE MAN TRAP, who was in command when both Kirk and Spock left the bridge for Sickbay to learn that all the sait had been drained for the dead crewman? Instead of hollering for Green, why didn't they use the communicator? How did "Nancy" retain Green's shape while beaming aboard?

In MENAGERIE, just how did Spock make all those tapes, especially such complex ones as that of Kirk ordering McCoy to leave Chris Pike alone? The Human voice is very complex and varying inflections make it difficult to simply piece a tape together from log entries or other sources.

Also in MENAGERIE, what personal reservations did Spock have about showing Kirk what he was like thirteen years previous and what must he have been thinking while watching himself emotionally respond to a plant? And speaking of first officers, who held that position under Willard Decker -- Sonak?

In MENAGERIE, the only crime for which there is a death penalty is visiting Talos IV. But in THE ULTIMATE COMPUTER, Daystrom and the M-5 state that the penalty for murder is death. Are they speaking about a personal code of ethics, the laws of Daystrom's home planet as opposed to FEderation/Starfleet, or what?

In OBSESSION, Kirk's first deep space mission was on the <u>Farragut</u>, as a lieutenant. But in COURT MARTIAL, it was mentioned that he was in deep space on the Republic as an ensign. What happened?

In THE PARADISE SYNDROME, if the <u>Enterprise</u> was directly between the planet and the asteroid, why wasn't the ship destroyed when the deflector was activated; or how could Spock be certain the <u>Enterprise</u>'s orbit did not place the ship in the line of fire?

How could the <u>Enterprise</u> officers fit so well into the society of PATTERNS OF FORCE? Such a tough bunch as the Nazis would have detected the use of a translator, or a difference in accent if the planets-used Federation Standard. Yet they are easily identified by the Zeons as "outsiders." What really are the differences between them?

In THE THOLIAN WEB, exactly why do the Tholians have a reputation for punctuality and territoriality? What type of being are they that they seem to glow? Do they live at what is for us an excessively high temperature?

In THE ULTIMATE COMPUTER, why was a freight carrier anywhere near a war games test area? And why did Dr. McCoy have security clearance throughout the ship if it isn't the norm? Or did Dr. Daystrom just now realize that ship's doctors had such clearance so that they could treat the injured where they were injured?

And did the M-5 computer in some way sense Kirk's distrust and fear, and react by taking complete control lest it be turned off forever (i.e, killed)?

Also in THE ULTIMATE COMPUTER, why did Bob Wesley call Kirk "dunsel"? If he were such a compassionate person and friend, he should have known Kirk was touchy about any threat to his authority. It certainly didn't sound like a joke.

In THE WINK OF AN EYE, Spock's phaser works normally when it destroys the freezer mechanism. Yet it was demonstrated earlier -- when Kirk shot at Deela -- that Federation phasers work too slowly for

that time frame.

In STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE, when did Spock find the time to brush up on his science and engineering so that he was capable of diagnosing the ills of the new warp drive? Why didn't he call ahead to announce his impending arrival? For that matter, why didn't traffic control tell the Enterprise a rendezvous was forthcoming?

What incidents provoked an attack by the Klingons on Vegur? Since it was obviously headed for Earth, why didn't they simply let it pass through the Klingon Empire?

There was a three minute warning that auxiliary power tests would begin. Why did Rand begin a beamup, especially knowing that they were still working on repairs to the transporter in Engineering?

Were persoan devices built into the bed, so that a person who sleeps on his stomach, could? Where were the persoans put in swimsuits, karate outfits, etc?

If McCoy had followed up on Spock's "My task on Vulcan is completed," what might he have said? For that matter, why did he stand there like a log?

What kept the Enterprise from being absorbed into Vejur or simply destroyed by the energies released? Kirk orders Decker and Ilia to be listed as "missing." What happens to the heirs who can't inherit? In STAR TREK: THE WRATH OF KHAN, what does Spock want McCoy to remember?

What was Spock doing if Saavik was his protege at Starfleet Academy?

#### THE TALE OF THE PLOT

For those of you who just need the right idea to be able to write the Ultimate Star Trek Story. Or perhaps you just want to have a little fun trying to write an impossible story. For me, these are "stories-l-always-wanted-to-see." Consider yourself challenged.

#1. "... and there you will pick up the Gorn ambassador, Navratil. You will transer him to Babel II and remain there as his official bodyguard until the treaty is signed. Admiral Corfatt, out."

"Navratil? What kind of name is that for a Gorn?" Dr. Leonard McCoy muttered as the Starfleet transmission ended.

"Bodyguard," Lt. Chekov, Chief of Security, mumbled a trifle tocloudly from his station.

"Yes, Mr. Chekov, that is an excellent question," replied Commander Spock.

"Huh?" several people asked at once.

"Why does a Gorn need a bodyguard?" Spock reiterated patiently.

#2. "It's a Klingon baby, Jim."

"A Klingon baby," Kirk repeated resignedly. "I've quarreled with Klingons on Organia, outrun them on Capella IV, outfoxed them on Neural, put up with tribbles and Klingons and emotion-eating clouds and Klingons, even fought Kahless the Unforgettable, but what the hell am I supposed to do with a Klingon baby on my transporter?"

"Survive and succeed?" McCoy offered sarcastically, looking down at the offender.

"Waaa!" the infant wailed in agreement. It also wet the transporter platform, promptly causing a short cuircuit.

"Bones, get that kid outa there!"

#3. "Open hailing frequencies, Lt. Uhura."

"No. sir."

Automatically, Captain James T. Kirk punched the appropriate button on his chair and began to announce, "This is the Captain..." to the universe and the alien ship off the starboard bow. Then what his communications officer said registered.

"What do you mean, 'no', " he threatened. There was definitely no question mark at the end of the sentence.

#4. "Spock, you lied to me. Vulcans never lie. Especially not to their captains."
"Prove it," the stone-faced first officer replied.

"All right, I will ..." Kirk paused and frowned. "Prove which?"

#5. "... and you will get us away from this senseless battle with the Klingons and deliver me to Farstar V on time or I'll have you court martialed," the Federation ambassador thundered.

Everyone on the bridge of the <u>Enterprise</u> cringed, though it could have been from the strength of the phaser barrage which rocked the ship at that moment.

"Number Three shield destroyed, Captain." Spock announced from his station.

At the same time, Scotty shouted over the intercom from Engineering. "Captain, me bairns can't take any more. We're down to fourteen percent."

Kirk gritted his teeth. "Ambassador, if you don't get off my bridge, you won't survive to file court martial charges. Why don't you go tell the Klingons to leave?"

Sulu announced, "The Klingons are firing again."

The ambassador appeared not to hear. "I anticipated this reaction from you, Kirk, and have already filed -- via subspace radio, direct to Admiral Nogura."

And that moment, the lights went out and the machine noises died.

#6. "Get it fixed, Scotty. We only have ten minutes before we burn up," Kirk nearly shouted into the center seat communicator.

"Nine point six seven, Captain."

"Oh, shut up, Spock," the captain muttered.

"What was that last, sir?" Scott asked.

"Nothing. Just get those engines fixed."

"Can't, sir. Some ugly old hag just beamed aboard and stole all our tools."

#7. "Um, it's Romulan, Jim. Sort of."

"Obviously it's Romulan, Bones. Why else would a pointy eared baby appear on my transporter platform just after a Romulan ship appears off our port bow? I'll dock Spock a month's pay for this mistake."

"I'd say eighteen years would be more appropriate," the Chief Medical Officer retorted.

Kirk stared. "What? What did you say?"

"Eighteen years. I'm not completely sure, mind you -- I need to make more tests -- but I'm willing to bet Spock's the father."

"You mean it was that Romulan ship? But it's been over a year!"

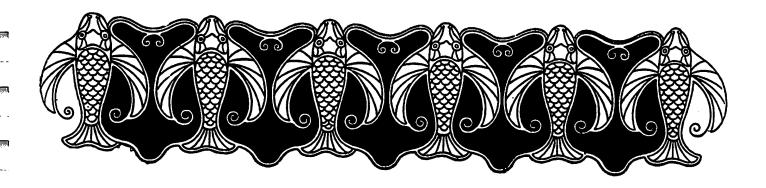
McCoy glanced at the sleeping infant. "That's about right. So how'ya gonna tell Spock?"

"You're the doctor. You're gonna tell him. That's an order," Kirk added as he saw McCoy start to protest.

McCoy groaned. There was no arguing with the captain when he used that tone. "Yes, sir."

#### PARTING THOUGHT

John Paul Jones said, "Give me a fast ship, for I intend to go in harm's way." May James T. Kirk and all those who crew the Enterprise and her sister ships do that for many, many years to come. Live Long and Prosper, everyone! [June 1983]



#### STAR TREK 1½:

#### ABC'S Version of STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE

-- A Commentary by Debbie Gilbert --

Oh, the sweet satisfaction of seeing ST on prime-time network television! (And not NBC, you'll note.) Upon viewing ST:TMP with its fifteen minutes of additional footage, I was both delighted and appalled. Delighted at the scenes themselves, appalled at the stupidity of the people who cut them out of the original version. What a difference those few scenes would have made, and what a movie ST:TMP could have been!

Even for some of the familiar scenes, thought the lines were identical, they substituted new takes, with better voice inflections. This was particularly noticeable in the scene in Kirk's quarters, where McCoy came across as being more compassionate. Also, in the new Spock scenes, they didn't deepen his voice electronically, so he doesn't sound like an automaton.

Surprisingly, the movie looked better on commercial TV than it has anywhere else (I guess that proves where ST's rightful place is). In the theater, the ship's lighting seemed dark, cold, and impersonal. When it was on HBO, the heightened the brightness, which only reduced the contrast in the actors' faces and made the special effects look fake. (Now they're doing the same thing with STAR WARS, where the matter are embarrassingly obvious.) But on ABC, though the film appeared grainy in some of the bridge scenes, the lighting seemed warmly human and realistic. It was like watching an entirely new movie.

And in a way, it was. I gained much insight. For example, Uhura's comment, when Kirk first comes aboard, that now their chances of survival have doubled implies that she hasn't much faith in Decker's ability. Decker's metaphysical bent is manifested in perhaps the movie's most profound line, "We all create God in our own image."

McCoy's sarcastic wit crops up again in the marvelous line, "or a crew of a thousand, ten miles tall." And Ilia now creates mystique rather than confusion. The celibacy oath is explained; Sulu reacts to the effect of her pheromes; her healing ability is demonstrated; and the nature of her relationship with Decker is clarified.

The introduction of Starfleet Order 2005 was important both to the plot and to Kirk's command judgement. To destroy the ship is such a logical move that I don't know why it didn't occur to me. This also gave Scott a nice scene with the young crewwoman. Only problem is, I thought self-destruct could only be done by voice code of the senior officers. (That being the case, what happens if you need to destroy the ship but the senior officers are already dead?)

I didn't like Kirk's spacewalk. For one, when he starts out his suit is white, but by the time he reaches Spock it has changed color! [ED. NOTE: THIS IS PART OF THE FOOTAGE THAT WAS LOST IN THE FIRE AT ABEL'S, WHEN THEY WERE STILL IN CHARGE OF THE SPECIAL EFFECTS.] Too, since they had no music for this sequence, they put in <a href="Ilia">Ilia</a>'s theme as background! I also thought it was bad editing to insert an Ilia/Decker scene between Spock in space and Spock lying in Sickbay. The audience is wondering whether Spock is alive or dead, and they're not interested in seeing Ilia put a wreath on her head.

Last and best of all: when Spock turned to Kirk with tears streaming down his face, I almost fainted! I was shocked not so much by Spock's behavior as by the fact that this beautiful, wonderful scene had been kept secret from us for three years. I found it much more moving than the famous Sickbay reconciliation scene. Notice how Kirk protects Spock; he doesn't let his surprise show, and he glances around to see if any of the crew is watching. McCoy is also understanding; he does not comment on Spock's display of emotion.

I haven't enjoyed the movie so much since the first night it opened, and I sure hope that the next time it is shown anywhere the new scenes will be left in. Does anyone know who was responsible for the television re-editing? The credits didn't say. [ED. NOTE: THE NEW CUTS WERE MADE ACCORDING TO GENE RODDENBERRY'S NOTES, ACCORDING TO HIS ASSISTANT, SUSAN SACKETT.]



# INSUFFICIENT DATA!! -- STAR TREK: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK --

by Rosemarie Eierman

For Harve Bennett -- and for Debbie

Most of my friends rave about STAR TREK III: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK. Then there is one who rants and raves about how much she hates ST III. Meanwhile, I sat there wondering what both sides were talking about. For me ST III is a splendid movie — as long as I consider it in small sections. The whole just is not the sum of the parts. It does not even come close. The first time I saw it I resented being emotionally manipulated by microdoses of humor, pathos, courage, anger. I backed off from that position as the result of subsequent viewings, but my central objection still holds. ST II, for all its faults, flows evenly and inevitably towards the climax; ST III comes by fits and starts to a glorious moment of reunion, but has no real climactic scene, no one moment when we can say, "Ah, all this effort, all these sacrifices ... They will succeed." There is no point beyond which all is inevitable and there is no turning back. Or, perhaps it is that the moment comes too early in the movie. If so, which moment is it? When Sarek melds with Kirk and tells him, "You will find a way"? When Kirk tells his officers, "The word is no. Therefore I am going anyway."? On the bridge of the Enterprise when everyone tells Kirk they have made their choices? No matter, they all happen very early in the film, and the rest of it is the inevitable working out of the drama, and it takes up too much of the movie.

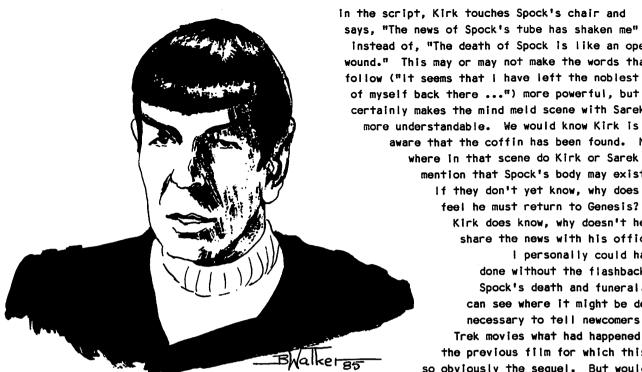
It also happens too quickly. I do not mean only that the movie is five or ten minutes too short; once the Enterprise gets away from Earth we are given precious few moments to pause and think about what is happening. Instead we rush from one high-adrenalin event to another with only the occasional joke to relieve tension. Ships are blown up, planets shake, people die, one-two-three. Retaining certain touching scenes would have helped. Cutting away to see what Uhura and Sarek were doing possibly would have helped. Theirs was probably a slower, less breathless escape, and much of the time would have been spent in conversation. Perhaps we could have learned more about Starfleet, Vulcan, and faltor-pan.

But it seems that such a scene was never written. Or, if it was, it was eliminated long before the "Revised Final Draft" of September 13, 1983 (sold by Lincoln Enterprises). As it is, there are some very interesting differences between this script and the final version shown in the theaters (see also the "Release Dialogue Script" dated May 4, 1984 available from Lincoln Enterprises). Perhaps in a comparison of these two versions we can find reasons for the unease some of us experience about this movie and perhaps also the answers to some other questions for which we have insufficient data.



TINKER, TAILOR -- ANOTHER OPENING The final draft opens with Spock hoarsely voicing, "Space ... the final frontier," etc. over a background of the Genesis planet and its star, the trees, Spock's casket and back to space and Genesis again as the opening credits conclude. Then comes a super: "The Genesis Planet. Stardate 8031.3." Grissom nears Genesis and the scene is set by Saavik, who announces, "We are approaching destination planet at point zero three five. So noted in ship's log." (Note slightly different wording.) Esteban gives the order for a coded message to Starfleet -- with the addition of, "As ordered, full security procedures are in effect." And so on into the scene to the point where the message about the location of Spock's coffin is sent. Then the draft cuts to Kirk's personal log entry and the information that provides us.

Would the movie have been better left this way? Yes and no. The added piece of information that <u>Grissom</u> was being extra cautious would have better prepared us for Admiral Morrow's remarks about galactic controversy. But it certainly makes Kirk's log more effective to have come first: why tell us Saavik and David have been reassigned when we have already seen that for ourselves? On the other hand,



in the script, Kirk touches Spock's chair and says, "The news of Spock's tube has shaken me" instead of, "The death of Spock is like an open wound." This may or may not make the words that follow ("It seems that I have left the noblest part of myself back there ...") more powerful, but it certainly makes the mind meld scene with Sarek more understandable. We would know Kirk is aware that the coffin has been found. No-

> mention that Spock's body may exist. If they don't yet know, why does Kirk feel he must return to Genesis? If Kirk does know, why doesn't he share the news with his officers? I personally could have done without the flashback to Spock's death and funeral. I can see where it might be deemed necessary to tell newcomers to Trek movies what had happened in the previous film for which this is so obviously the sequel. But would

there be anyone going to this movie who did not know that Spock had died and not merely been "misplaced"? At any rate, most of the materis also presented elsewhere, in Kirk's log, in the scenes between Kirk and Sarek. Newcomers hardly needed to be

told several times that Spock is dead and his friends and family miss him, fans most definitely did not. Opening with the credits and the Genesis scenes would have been better, just as having the first action scene be on the Enterprise was the better choice.

SOLDIER, SAILOR -- WHO ARE THESE CLOWNS ANYWAY? There is a production note on the first page of the final draft that may help to explain why these particular Klingons seem to be incompetent or "mellow" in comparison to their counterparts in the television series and ST 1. Berserkers these fellows certainly are not, but I do not feel they rate the label of "clowns" some fans have stuck them with.

Harve Bennett wrote in part: "...try to remember the sublime dedication and madness (emphasis mine) of the Japanese Kamikaze.

"The bird of prey described in these pages is a standard small-sized Klingon long-ranged scout/ attack ship... Please note that the officers, being aristocrats, will speak English to each other but Klingon to their inferiors in the crew."

Aristocrats is the key word here. In any feudal or otherwise hierarchical society, certain people. are designated to be the warrior class. Usually this is also the ruling class, for obvious reasons. As soon as a function becomes the sole preserve of one designated, hereditary group, it becomes inevitable that a fair percentage of that group will be incompetent in the role chosen for them. There is no way to tell the second son of the third cousin of the ruler that he cannot serve -- unless that commanding officer is willing to die young or live in disgrace for the rest of his life. It is possible to tell a volunteer that he is unfit for his position. So the incompetents remain and, very often, due to their rank, do not get themselves killed, only others.

The problem only gets worse as the aristocracy becomes in-bred. Incompetents are related to more people -- and there are more incompetents. There is also more madness, both that of the fanatic determined to live up to the reputation of his ancestors and that resulting genetically.

Kruge, Torg and Maitz seem to be the latter, all properly fired up with loyal Klingon ideas, though not to excess, and not terribly stable or intelligent. They are probably third or fourth sons of minor nobles, proud of their status to the point of arrogance, and given their present assignment because, despite the mission's importance, it is where they can do the least harm. Is it any wonder they occasionally bumble and stumble? In that sense, they are comic: tragi-comic. There is no other way they could be.

Bennett's rationale for the aristocracy using English instead of Klingonese is probably rooted

in Russian history. For almost two hundred years Russian aristocrats conducted their affairs in French, speaking Russian only to the servants and serfs. Yet France was often Russia's enemy during this same time. Granted, the parallel does not completely hold up, for these aristocrats admired Old Regime French culture while warring with the Revolution and it is difficult to imagine the Klingons admiring anything except superior strength — which has little to do with language. Still, it is possible that Klingonese simply does not contain certain turns of phrase necessary to shipboard life and the Empire adopted military/scientific English to fill the need. Klingons seem to deal in absolutes, in all-or-none solutions, after all. What better way to understand the Federation military mind than to speak the Federation military language? As it also happens, the jokes and the long conversations tend to be in English — easier on the audience and a neat solution to the problem of pacing (it takes most people longer to read than to hear a given piece of dialogue).

RICH MAN, POOR MAN, BEGGARMAN ... THIEF Kirk's report to Starfleet, intact, is delivered to Kruge by a Klingon woman traveling aboard a slezy merchantman crewed by various Federation races. The Federation Council is "up to its brass in galactic conference," trying to "hammer out" a treaty on the Genesis device and turn it on their enemies, first the Federation, then any others both real and imagined. And Starfleet -- or the Federation -- has a leak.

Kirk's report should have gone to the Commanding Admiral's office,ie, Morrow's, to the Chief of Science, and perhaps one or two other high ranking officials in Starfleet. Some form of message must have gone to Vulcan and to top Federation officials. However, Sarek says, "I have been to your government. I have seen the Genesis information and your own report." Perhaps Kirk's report was not immediately recognized as a crisis-in-the-making and not stamped top secret until far too late? If so, it could easily have been intercepted in transmission or distribution. However, the formal report must not have gone to Vulcan nor to the Federation Council. Sarek, as a high-ranking ambassador, could have gotten the information from either. But he got it on Earth after being routinely informed of Spock's death. (Comment: what's the matter with Kirk, anyway, not informing Sarek personally? People usually do that for their best friend's family.) Therefore, unless the political climate on Vulcan—or in Sarek's soul—has altered and the Federation Council become "them" instead of "us," Federation governmental officials have received the details on a "need to know" basis only. Sarek had to push his weight around elsewhere, either at Terran World Government headquarters or at Starfleet.

Why would Earth government know more than the Federation? It was the Federation, through Starfleet, which funded the Genesis Project. Likewise, why would Sarek, the precise Vulcan ambassador, deem Starfleet a "government"? It makes no sense, except to take us back to the "them vs us" argument.

It seems that all we can be sure of is that soemwhere, probably in Starfleet's higher echelons, is a long-time agent-in-place who was able, first, to inform the Klingons of the Genesis Device and second, to send them a copy of Kirk's report via a Klingonese courier/spy. That spy was able to take advantage of certain elements in Federation society to get the tape safely to Kruge, who was waiting for her and it.

Question -- how many other traitors like the merchant captain are out there instead of in rehabilitation centers? Question -- did Kruge transmit the tape back to the Klingon Empire's government? Question -- is the Federation and Starfleet now actively tracing down this and other spies and their confederates who have been stealing valuable information and selling it to the Klingons? Question -- where do the Romulans stand in all of this?

DOCTORS -- ONE, SLIGHTLY ODD "Perhaps it is the erratic behavior of Ship's Surgeon McCoy." This line was cut from Kirk's log entry, and with it a most revealing scene between Kirk and McCoy which came immediately after. Kirk is in the lift when the doors open and McCoy -- "disheveled, unshaven -- and in a very odd emotional place" -- enters. Kirk asks McCoy if he plans on shaving. McCoy answers with, "Quo vadis, Admiral?"

and when told that they'll be orbiting Earth in two hours, tells Kirk, "Then we're headed in the wrong direction."

"Bones, don't do this. This is me, Jim. Your friend."

"And I have been, and always shall be, yours."

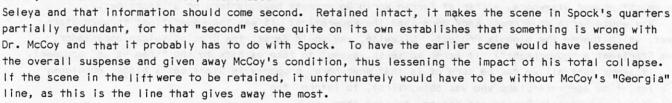
"Damn it, Bones, don't quote Spock to me! I have enough pain of my own and I don't need your -- self-indulgence!"

"You left me. You left me on Genesis. Why did you do that?"

"What the hell are you saying"

The disgruntled McCoy returns to "normal," shaken by what has just been said between them, but he wonders why they have left Spock. Kirk tries to convince him that Spock is dead and they simply have to live with it. But McCoy says, "I can't get him out of my head, Jim. I'd give the whole state of Georgia if someone could tell me why."

Unfortunately for us, it was decided this scene was far too revealing for its location in the story. But could it have been put elsewhere? Probably not. The scene gives away to the alert viewer information that Spock is still around and is "stored" in McCoy's head, but it couldn't replace the scene between Kirk and McCoy in Spock's quarters, for we need to hear about climbing the steps of Mount Sileya. It also couldn't come after that scene, for then we have already heard about



The latter scene would be more effective with its original ending left in, as it would help clarify Kirk's motivations in the scene between Kirk and Sarek: "Bones, it's all right." As much as Kirk cares about sacrificed friend Spock, he cares about his living friend McCoy.

LAWYERS (SUBSPECIES: PHILADELPHIA) Was it just me, or did everyone find Esteban to be a real snit? Is he Starfleet's idea of an ideal commander? Bennett describes him as "late forties, a cautious Starfleet veteran." If he's a veteran, he must have gotten there via milk runs. He never takes a risk, everything must be triple-checked. Saavik and David Marcus spend several minutes discussing conditions on the planet and the discovery of Spock's coffin and he says, "We don't know what we're talking about here ..." in a tone of voice that clearly says, "I'm the father and you're the two-year-old — what do you know? But I'm humoring you." He quotes regulations better than Saavik. (In the draft, after quoting the regulation regarding danger of contamination, he asks David, "Can you guarantee that?" David, of course, replies, "Not from here, no." Saavik gets it again. When she begins quoting, Esteban finishes it and tells her, "I know the book, Saavik.") Later, as we know, when the two are on the planet, he humors them further: "This landing is Captain's discretion and I'm the one who's out on a limb" is what he speaks. What he means is, "Okay, kiddies, have your fun. Just remember who's going to have to 'make it all better'." Saavik rightly tells him, drily, "I'll try to remember that, Captain."

When Saavik announces that they have found a child, he is condescending yet again. "Ah, Saavik, that's, ah, that's extraordinary. What would you like to do next?" Translation: "Geesh — what next! Well, you're having fun. Now, what would you like to do so you stay out of my hair a bit longer?" When they ask to beam up, he stalls them by making them wait while he gets instructions from HQ, "by the book." This proves to be the second to last time he does things this way. The last, of course, is when he requests, "Stand by for evasive—" as the Klingons fire, instead of simply getting the hell out of there and picking up the pieces later.

All this is the movie Esteban, of course. If we study the Revised Draft, we see that Esteban was not totally unaware of the situation. There is a brief scene just as Saavik and David encounter the snow while seeking the source of the cries. Saavik notes, "We hear it whenever the ground quakes." She then calls Esteban and reports their finding of a second life sign reading and that they are proceeding to investigate. Esteban replies, "We concur, Saavik. And Saavik... be advised we are reading a severe and unnatural age curve on the planet. I'm getting nervous ...." Saavik looks at David. "Do you have an explanation?" David brushes her off. "Later. Let's go ...." Saavik acknowledges Esteban's message and signs off. We then see Esteban bend over the science station and comment, "What the hell's going on down there?"

This scene reveals two very important points. First, Esteban is a scientist, which explains his cautious approach to everything. Most likely he rose through the scientific ranks rather than through the formal training command positions and has served all his life on scientific vessels. He is a scientist who happens to be captain and not a military person, and he has had forced upon him two young scientists of exceptional ability. It is now very easy to understand why he condescended to Saavik and David and why he took so long to react to the appearance of the Klingon ship. He becomes a much more sympathetic character: he's out of his element — and scared.

Secondly (and not related to the topic), David appears to suspect the planet's true nature and does not want to tell. This is not the first time he has avoided the topic. A beam-down scene was also cut. In it, Saavik looks around, perplexed, and requests of the <u>Grissom</u> a computer study of soil samples for geological aging. David cuts in, "I'll handle that later." When Saavik protests, he snaps, "We're not here to investigate geological aging, we're here to find life forms!" He knows. This scene was most likely cut to tighten the movie; the remark in the later scene really should have been retained, as it would have made David's later revelation about protomatter more meaningful.

In the theater-released version of ST III, Esteban isn't the only "lawyer." Admiral Morrow too is superb at quoting regulations and ignoring people's feelings. Unlike Estaben, he appears to be well-intentioned and basically decent. In the draft, however, this is not mere appearance, it is truth. Morrow embraces Kirk upon coming aboard the <a href="Enterprise">Enterprise</a> and Kirk is obviously moved by both the military courtesy and the obvious personal affection shown. Kirk quips, "I take it this is not a formal inspection," and everyone laughs. Morrow smiles, "No. At ease, everyone." He then asks after Dr. McCoy before launching on what ultimately becomes his bad news. When Kirk tells him (note the different wording), "But we had requested — we were hoping to take her back to Genesis ...!", Morrow is concerned and asks, "Whatever for?"

"Why -- a natural desire to help finish the work we began." (Comment: talk about double meanings!)
"That's out of the question. No one is going to Genesis!"



"May I ask why ...?"

They are then all told Genesis is quarantined. This way, Morrow comes across as basically a nice guy doing a hard job.

Morrow's confrontation with Kirk in the Starfleet lounge also shows this. In the draft we see that they are friends, not that Morrow is just using the term to get his way. Kirk speaks passionately to him:

"No, absolutely not, Jim, it's out of the question."

"Harry, I'm off the record now. I'm not speaking as one of your staff. I'm talking about thirty years of service. I have to do this, Harry. It has to do with my honor, my life -- everything I put any value on."

"Jim, you are my best officer and if I

had a best friend, you'd be that too. But I

am Commander, Starfleet, so I don't break rules."

"Don't quote rules, Harry. We're talking
about loyalty. And sacrifice. One man who died
for us, another who had deep emotional damage --"
What a difference in tone! We learn so much

about what is motivating Kirk to do this, why Morrow feels he must restrain Kirk. It continues this way for the entire scene. Morrow says, "... part of me doesn't want you to make a fool of yourself ...." He explains more about the political situation, how the Federation, the Romulans and the Klingons are trying to hammer out a treaty on the Genesis device and "haven't got time for your personal views on friendship and metaphysics." Then and only then does he talk about Kirk's career standing for rationality. It all makes so much more sense this way; that remark is no longer out of place (Always-running-into-danger Kirk? Impulsive-held-back-by-Spock Kirk?) "You'll destroy yourself" takes on a personal, not a career meaning. Morrow is concerned. "Now take my suggestion, enjoy your leave -- and let all this tension blow away," he says by way of farewell. This is a guy I wouldn't mind having as my commanding officer. He knows what must be done and does it, but isn't afraid to sympathize with the person caught in the middle. As originally conceived, Morrow is not a "Philadelphia lawyer," he's a true friend.

Then there is Styles. Now don't get me wrong. Styles is a fun character and I look forward to him being in the next movie. Bennett describes him as "an officer about Kirk's age. If he's a little stuffy, it's pardonable; he does, after all, have the plum assignment in all of Starfleet!" Stuffy? He reeks upper echelon British military, late 19th century variety. He is probably the only thing worse than a "Philadelphia lawyer" this side of a dictator. Imagine berating a crewman for announcing a Yellow Alert while in space dock. The answer once again appears in the script, where Styles was asleep, not lying there buffing his nails. The change is more humorous but slightly less understandable.

'MERCHANTS' AND THEIR CHIEFS "SOMEWHERE IN ORGANIAN SPACE" The merchant captain is obviously a reprobate, is probably a Federation traitor and is certainly a renegade. More than enough said, except to wonder why the Federation police haven't shut them down yet. Bennett's pre-editing room Valkris is an interesting character, however, so it is probably just as well that both the Federation and the Organians were off doing something else instead of paying attention to this bunch.

When the captain complains to her, "I thought you people were reliable ... Where the hell is he?", Valkris replies, "He has been here for some time. I can feel his presence." The captain snarls, "Don't give me your Klingon mumbo-jumbo -- there ain't another vessel in this whole damn quadrant." We have been told something new about at least some Klingons: they have some form of telepathy and can sense each other's presence. Under what conditions, we do not know, but this is a start into a whole new range of possibilities.

We also learn a trifle more about the relationship between Valkris and Kruge. She comments, "Transmission completed" as in the movie, but "You will find it usefull" was originally "You will find it essential to our mission."

This would seem to indicate a close working partnership, for spies seldom are told the purpose of the activities they are asked to perform. Neither do we see her final act, a ritual covering of her face with her veil. Valkris is the "enemy," but she has dignity, nobility, and a firm belief in her cause.

Was she trusted servant, comrade, family?

We probably will never know.

ESCAPE WITH HUMOR AND ELAN "The word is no. I am therefore going anyway." So begins the longest and funniest escape in Star Trek's history. However, there are relatively few changes from Bennett's Revised Final Draft to the movie screen. One more laugh could surely have been gotten from the dropped final line of Kirk's order to McCoy in the prison cell (note change of body part): "Give me your arm. This will make you well enough to travel. How do you do this, anyway?", Kirk says, referring to the hypo.

One of McCoy's guards lost several neat lines as well. After Kirk felled the guard in McCoy's cell came this monologue by the huge guard outside: "Sixth Floor Holding ...



Yah, come up and get him, his visitor's just leaving. (Beat.) What? Well, some admiral name of -Kirk. (Much squawk in ear.) Well how am I supposed to know--? He's a damn admiral!" He gets out of
his chair, turns and sees McCOy and Kirk. "What the hell's going--" Sulu fells him with a "martial
chop." Now if that (less "chop") could have prefaced Sulu's neat flip of the guard, no one would have
stopped laughing in time to hear the next scene!

There was a very brief scene located after "up yer shaft" where a mysterious hand throws a switch at a transporter panel. Chekov is revealed in the glow and Scotty is beamed up. "Welcome home, Mr. Scott." Thank you, Chekov .... Let's get some life in the old girl." To hear the obvious affection these two have for the ship and each other would have been touching.

The opening remarks of Uhura's scenes got slightly altered. In the draft they went: "Gentlemen. Good evening." "Good evening, Commander. Everything ready?" "Yes, Admiral. Step into my parlor?" The lieutenant watches for a while, then whispers, "Commander, these are some of the most famous people in Starfleet! Admiral Kirk, my God!" Likewise, on the Enterprise bridge the order of the words was slightly different and the mini-scene of the cleaning man watching the ship sneak out was earlier. Most interesting is McCoy's comment as the Excelsior powers up, "My God, she's gaining on us just sitting there ...." When things went wrong aboard Excelsior, the event was described as "a massive build-up of SOUND, and then -- a sudden series of BANGS, SHAKES, COUGHS and WHEEZES, as if the ship had hit a series of potholes in space." (Comment: Watching the scene for the first time, I immediately thought of the blooper reels, the part where an engineer (Scotty?) shovels coal into the furnace and the Enterprise goes (backfire, backfire) on its way.) Sulu says, "Excelsior, the great experiment, is admirt in space." Then Scotty hands McCoy the micro chips and off they head for Genesis.

ENEMIES AND CLD FRIENDS Again, except for changes in the location of cuts, tiny bits of tightening or clarification, the final battles between the <u>Enterprise</u> and the bird of prey and between Kirk and Kruge see few changes from draft to movie. After the Klingon ship is hit, Kirk compliments Scotty on his shooting; Scotty says, "Aye, those two hits should stop a horse, let alone a bird."

After David dies and Kruge finishes his threats by giving Kirk two minutes, McCoy asks Kirk, who is standing by his chair surrounded by his crew, "Jim, you okay?" Kirk is therefore able to pull himself back together in the company of old friends who must be saved despite the loss of a new-found son rather than alone amidst his crew. And when Kirk swears they aren't finished yet, it is McCoy again who affirms their loyalty: "We never have been, Jim." Both of these remarks strengthen our view of the depth of their commitment to each other and they also would have make Kirk's later question and McCoy's reply even more poignant and correct: "My God, Bones. What have I done?" "What you had to do. What you always do. Turn death into a fighting chance to live." In the draft, the doctor also implored, "You hear me, Jim?", to which Kirk took a deep breath and nodded.

Another scene that was cut came immediately after. Maltz is watching with apprehension as Kruge suffers over the loss of the majority of his crew. Maltz asks for orders. "I underestimated him .... He did the one thing I didn't anticipate .... He destroyed himself ...."

Maitz tries again. Kruge continues as if he did not hear. "Killing his son was stupid! It made Kirk willing to die."

"We still have the prisoners, sir. Perhaps their information--"

"They are useless! It was Kirk I needed. And I let him slip away."

"But surely, our mission has not failed--?"

"Our mission is over. I have failed .... A <u>Human</u> has been bolder and more ruthless than I ....
That -- is the real dishonor."

This scene, more than any other, displays the nature of the later physical conflict between Kirk and Kruge and also illustrates the fact that Kruge was most definitely not a "clown." He was a proud young aristocrat bested by an enemy he, in his pride, underestimated. He failed to live up to the standards he set for himself as well as those his society and Empire set for him. Kirk, as he has done so often, did the unexpected and broke the confidence of his opponent. (Comment: Some of the critics of the "useless" death of the Enterprise might have been placated by retention of this bittersweet scene.) Kruge felt dishonored, and to salvage his honor and that of his family (should they somehow find out), he beams down to personally confront Kirk. He has nothing more to lose, he can be and is as reckless as only a person certain he is going to die can be. For its incisive look into the psychology of a Klingon, this scene is essential and, if filmed, should be restored when ST ill airs on network television.

OH, SON: MY SON Bones is requested to look after Spock. In the Draft Saavik, who had emotionally told Kirk of David's death, now sags against Kirk. "Easy, Saavik. It's all right." But then the admiral spots David's body. He gives a last hug to Saavik, crosses to David, kneels and touches

his son's brow. He quotes softly, "To thee no star be dark .... Both heaven and earth .... Friend thee forever."

VULCAN AHEAD If we can just push the right button! "Anyone here read Klingon? (Pause) Well, take your best shot." They do, and as they proceed to Vulcan, another informative and confusing scene gets trimmed out. Kirk orders Saavik to contact Sarek, informing him that they bring McCoy and Spock's living body, and ask him to prepare for the Katra ritual. Saavik tells Kirk she does not know if that is possible: "The Katra ritual is meant to deposit Spock's consciousness in the Hall of Ancient Thought—not in his body."

"But we have Spock alive! Why can't they return his katra?!"

"Most unusual. What you suggest is called Fal-Tor-Pan -- the refusion. The elders may not choose to attempt it."

"And if they don't ...? What will happen to Spock?" (i.e, his body.)

"... He will remain always as he is ...."

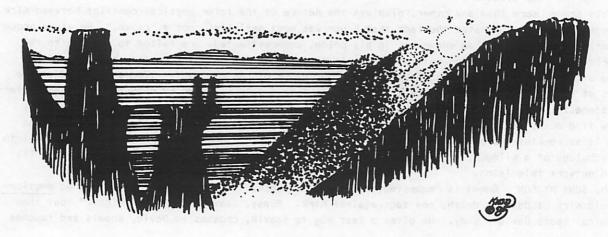
Kirk is horrified and goes to the sickbay, where Spock's body rests. McCoy is there still and Kirk participates in a very different event from what we see in the movie. McCoy is scanning Spock, but stops in frustration. "Spock ... I've done everything I know to do .... Help me! You stuck me with it, for heaven's sake, teach me what to do with it! (pause) I never thought I'd ever say this to you ... but I've missed you. And I couldn't bear to lose you again." Bennett described the rest of the scene: "He lowers his head in helpless grief on the form of the unmoving Spock .... Kirk steps forward now, puts his hand gently on McCoy, then on Spock .... Three lives, intertwined for so long ...."

All the fuss, all the recriminations, and Sarek still did not come clean. In the draft is one additional line which suggests that in typical(ly) vague and obscure) Vulcan fashion he was explaining the katra ceremony, but that is unprovable: "You must bring them to Mount Seleya — on Vulcan. Only there is the passage possible. Only there can both find peace ...." Kirk has destroyed his career for reasons we don't know, to go back to Genesis after Spock's body and just now gets told straight that restoring Spock to life probably isn't what Vulcan wants, whether or not it is what Sarek has in mind.

And once again a beautiful scene of friendship has been altered and cut in search of a joke, after several lovely jokes have been cut to make way for a shorter movie. Here is McCoy, at wits end, compassionate, searching, pleading his friendship even though he knows there is no one to hear. As it turns out, someone does hear, someone else, and they share a quiet and inspiring moment of hope.



And so we come to Vulcan, miss an awesome procession up Mount Seleya and a little girl whispering, "Live long and prosper, Spock" as she temporarily joins the procession. We also miss Spock's first tentative approach to Kirk: "I know you ... Do I not?" "Yes, and I, you." But we have come to the end of the journey and Spock is back again. For the most part, this journey has been worth it. The acting is excellent, the jokes funny, the enemy villainous and vanquished. Any dissatisfaction felt seems to have been caused by editing to fit a time limit and a real or perceived audience need for action rather than interaction instead of to fit an artistic goal. Reconsideration and restoration of many of those scenes and sentences probably would make ST III a movie to rave about for years to come. In the meantime, we have learned a bit more about friends and enemies old and new and found sufficient data where once things were insufficient. Live long and prosper.



# **Our Readers Respond**

(Back-Patting Department)

#### CHRIS MEYERS:

My favorite feature was "Who's Who at SF Conventions" (by LaVena Kay Kidd) — I must have a split personality. I recognized myself in quite a few of the characters. I was most impressed with Barbara Walker's artwork (a style I try to copy).

#### MORIA WASHBURN:

About TaL 3 -- beautiful, simply beautiful! TaL 2 was very good (despite the micro-print), but TaL 3 is excellent. The entire "look" of the zine is lovely; print, graphics, arrangement of material.. I was impressed before I even began to read it.

The variety of illo types, from realistic to whimsical, was very effective. Naturally, I particularly appreciated the beautiful illos by LaVena and those utterly delightful drawings by Melody Rondeau on my stories. I was also especially impressed by the illos on page 38, the "Who's Who at SF Cons," and the back cover (very nice).

It's difficult to single out any of the stories or poems as particular favorites; I enjoyed them all — with two exceptions. First, I didn't "like" "Reverse Image' [by Ginna LaCroix]; it was depressing and gave me the crawling creeps. Or, to put it another way, it was a beautifully effective, well-written story that really hit its mark. I may not have "liked" it, but I very much admired it. If I could pick a favorite from among the stories, this one might well be it.

#### ANDREA MIDTMOEN:

Many belated thanks for TaL 3. What a superb publication, and so large! TaL 4, judging by the growth of each TaL, will be huge! As always, the quality was quite good, and I certainly didn't miss the teeny-tiny print of TaL 2. I was looking forward, however, to the continuation of the T'Racy Cane series of Vivian Bregman, and hope all is well with her.

#### KAREN HUNTER:

YOU LEFT OUT PAGE 259/260!!!

As long as I have to spend 20¢ on a stamp, I might as well go ahead and tell you how much I enjoyed the other 260 pages of TaL 3. It looks just beautiful and enormous. So nice not to read things reduced, as well. I like art nouveau, so I found the borders, etc. most delightful.

#### BARBARA WALKER:

I received TaL 3 and am most impressed. One of the best zines I've seen (and in the last year I've really seen a lot).

Congratulations! I'm glad you enjoyed my sketches -- it really was a labor of love.

#### LINDA SLUSHER:

Got my TaL and enjoyed it very much. I thought your "Vulcan Wings" poem was cute. So if you're like me and wonder if anybody's going to read the poetry, now you know I did.

On the subject of elitism, the only thing I didn't like in Tal was that ring story ("When It Hurts Too Much to Cry", by Moria Washburn! — I found it pretentious and paranoid. I loved everything else, though. The stories were entertaining; the poetry made sense, it wasn't just metaphysical claptrap; the illustrations ranged from good to sublime. (I think I got two of the sublime ones — lucky me!) You do cute borders, too.

#### LINDA BROWN:

Received my copy of TaL 3, and it is a work of art! I don't see how you manage to turn out such a professional-looking zine and still manage to lead a normal life.

I wanted to thank you for printing my poetry. Maybe everyone feels this way the first time, but i get such a kick out of seeing my name listed in the Contents. My head returned to normal after I started reading, and saw the beautiful poems by people like you, Patt Demetri, etc. I read them, and think, now why couldn't I have thought of that? Oh well ... guess I'll keep trying.

Before I forget ... loved your art that went with "Midnight Soliloquy"! It went perfectly. I can't draw a straight line with a ruler, so really appreciated people who can turn out art the way you can.

#### LYNDA CARRAHER:

Enclosed is my money order for \$14 and my order for TaL 3.

I didn't really intend to tease you about the "interesting things" comment — I was just in a bit of a rush (trying to beat the mailman) when I sent the query.

Quotes, she wants? From Chris Myers -- "Just received my contributor's copy (of TaL 3) -- outstanding looking. Haven't read it yet. I have a double spread fold-out piece in it I am very pleased with -- it's loaded with excellent artwork and interesting appearing articles. You might look into it -- I think it's worth whatever it costs."

That should make your day, even if a bit of enlightened self-interest (on Chris's part) is involved. And, after seeing the promo, how can I go wrong with authors like Karen Hunter and Ginny Thorn?

#### JON GREEN:

One word: BEAUTIFUL!

Are you sure it's not a prozine? I could list my favorite parts but since that would be almost everything, why bother. The part I didn't like was missing page 57/58 (I got two 27/28's). Do you have an extra one you can send me? I was deep into Barbara's "Barter the Stars" when all of a sudden it quit making sense. Something significant must have happened on that page. Anyway, it was worth waiting for, and I'm glad there are people like you and the others around who are willing to put in that much time and effort for such a perfect product. I'm ready to order TaL 4 as soon as you decide to do it.

The story, "When it Hurts Too Much to Cry," was strangely disturbing to me. It may be that it is an attack on Mensa, but it seems also be an attack, however mild, on what Mensa intends. Are we so short-sided and bigoted as that? I don't know.

#### GENNIE SUMMERS:

Tal 3 is really top quality! Each of the stories, poems or whatever impressed me as above average. I like the binding, as it makes it so much easier to handle.

The bios are fascinating to read. Being a fan who is not within personal reach of other fen makes this sort of thing all the more valuable to me.

I know a gal I'm going to send a copy of MIDNIGHT SOLILOGUY to. She feels exactly the same way.

I probably enjoyed "An Unexpected Pleasure" [by V.L. Thorn] the least, and just for personal reasons. I'm more of an action/adventure freak, I guess, although I do enjoy things like "The Legacy." It's short, and to the point, the way I like such things. Same for "Small Comforts" [by Beth Carlson]. "Deus ex Machina" [by Emily Ross] is especially good. "Mischief" and "Maturity" [by Debbie Gilbert] are also excellent insights. I probably won't comment on all the poetry -- I'm just turning through aain as I write -- but "A Mother's Response" [by Rowena G. Warner] is excellent. (Sorry I can't give an educated, in-depth analysis of all these, but I have neither the time nor the talent ...)

I also liked "Thoughts on a Spring Night" [by Linda Slusher]; because I like Klingons, and because I like Klingons that are more than one-dimensional nasties. "By Your Side" [by Patt Demetril is excellent, as is the illo that accompanies it. I intend to cover the artwork separately, but I couldn't pass this one by. I'm a Christine Myers fan.

"Barter the Stars" [by Barbara Yanosko] is more to my liking in a story, for the action, the character insights and development, the general feel of it. I also like Romulans and enjoy meeting characters that were introduced in the series. I really should make notes while reading, as I would have liked to have indicated specific points about this one. Seems I never have a pencil handy. I read these things in bed at night before snuggling down to sleep.

"By Sun and Candle-Light" [by Beth Carlson]: (Sex by Sun and Candle-Light?) Well, I suppose one such item in a zine is okay for kicks ....

"A Fold in the Wolf" [by Moria Washburn] is a delightful parody, and I love the twist, making Scotty guilty and looking for a scapegoat. So many of these spoofs are smutty, and this one is refreshingly different.

"It Could Have Been Glorious" [by Catherine Whitehead]: Love this insight into a nasty Klingon's mind! Kor is my favorite.

"Saving the Captain's Royal--" [by Beth Carlson] is a scream. Enuf said.

"Not out of the M--d Yet" [by Peter Scott] ahh, my favorite con man. When I see the name Harry Mudd I plunge in delightedly. Another goodie.

"Help!" [by Patt Demetri] is further insight into a favorite incident. I always smile at that, even after twenty (at least) viewings.

I think "The Best Medicine" [by Rowena G. Warner] really expresses Spock's feelings -- excuse me, attitude.

"When It Hurts Too Much to Cry" -- I imagine this would be intensely funny to a member of MENSA, but even to one who is not, it is highly amusing. I love a mystery like that which has me clawing the pages.

"Starfleet Academy Exam (by Stephen Mendenhall]: I don't know how serious this is supposed to be. (Construct a working Corbomite device??) Students must be a whole lot smarter than today or an exam like that would take years!

"The Written Word..." [by Stephen Mendenhall] ... I always enjoy articles about the aired series or movies.

"Scenes We'd Like to See" (by Stephen Mendenhall): Some of this is amusing, some rather tedious. I like the idea of Harry Mudd turning the Doomsday Machine into an amusement park!

"Conventional Adventures" [by Catherine Whitehead] I like Con reports. Some of them are just recitations of the personal experiences of the attendee, outside of the con itself. I want to know what went on, and as much content of that as possible. I can't get to any Cons. I want news! This one was fairly good.

"Who's Who..." This is a cute idea, and well executed. The artwork is superior, too. LOVE those little alien Bugs.

"Cowards in the Daylight" [by Rowena & Ellen Warner]: first time !'ve read a spoof of DEVIL IN THE DARK. Loved it! Lots of good barbs in it. Patt's poems which follow are all good. I like rhymed poetry best, but you see so little of it in zines. I think I know why; it's more work. I adore your limericks.

"Over the River..." [by Devery Helm] (By now you're probably gagging at my continual "This is good", but THIS IS! There are some marvelous jabs in it.

"In One Ear" [by Debbie Gilbert] is great, and I've certainly wondered about that, too. I absolutely adore Melody's Ceti Eel, and I'm gonna write and ask her for the original! So you'd better return it to her. I find myself thinking about it and smiling every time I think of the Ceti Eel.

"ST: The Home Movie": I don't think this was SUPPOSED to be as outrageous as some I've read, but it was good... I loved Ilia's accent as represented here at the first. I thought she sounded SO stupid in the movie.

I enjoyed "And Be Alone on Earth" [by Karen Hunter] a lot. I'm always interested in stories that fill in the gaps. This was very well done, I thought.

"M5--Again" [by Jon Green] I like this one a lot, too. Shows thought.

(Gad, there is so MUCH to this zine!)

"Spock Experiments" [by Karen Hunter] and its sequels were/are very absorbing. I like the central character.

"The Lesson" [by Robert Sayes] | like Saavik, and | like this. It's good to have a fresh new crewmember to play around with.

"Birthday Boy" [by Debbie Gilbert] It sounds just like David. Especially the attitude about Starfleet, even then.

"Nocturne" [by Beth Carlson] very nice, evokes a very pleasant feeling.

"Perceptions" [by Ginna LaCroix] and the rest of the poems are all excellent, and Barbara Walker's fantastic illos leave me breathless! Could you tell me what kind of pencil she used ... and did you have to go to extra expense to reproduce them? I love to do pencils, and most zines can't print the soft tones. I'm trying to discover some materials that will reproduce most everywhere.

"Reverse Image" [by Ginna LaCroix] is magnificent and a fitting conclusion to the zine, along with the two poems.

As I said, I wish I had time and talent to be more specific. It's been several days since I started this, as I write a bit at a time, as I find a moment to do so. Such a lovely zine with so many touching moments in it deserves better, but be assured I really treasure it, and it's one I will want to re-read, unlike a lot of others. I had intended to write more on the artwork, where I feel a bit more knowledgeable, but I've already indicated my favorites, I think. You have some lovely pieces, too, especially the back cover. Thanks again ....

#### DEBBIE GILBERT:

You've created a monster! Way back when you did the first TaL, a modest little number, you probably

didn't dream it would evolve into this, any more than George Lucas could have realized he was giving birth to a phenomenon when he did the first "Star Wars." I'm glad you decided to stick with the spiral binding. Nothing else is appropriate in a zine this size. I can't help pointing out that the zine could have been far less bulky had you reduced the print. I don't think it would have given anyone eyestrain if you had used the type size normally used in "TREKISM", and you would have saved lots on paper and postage. Also, I noticed you didn't follow the usual fanzine tradition of leaving a space between each paragraph in a story, and as a result the page sometimes looked cluttered and sentences were difficult to follow. I liked your old-fashioned touch with the graphics

Tha Art: As usual, I LOVED LaVena's work! My only complaint is that she made some attrocious spelling errors. It's possible that the inability to spell is an innate characteristic of cartoonists, for I encounter the problem with our own resident artist, Annette Taylor, and I even notice it in the daily comic strips from professionals who should know better. However, the responsibility lies with the editor, who should inspect everything submitted and not allow such mistakes to get into print. Besides, the strength of a cartoon lies in its ideas, not its grammar, and I always get a laugh out of LaVena's crazy inventive drawings. Another of your cartoonist, M. Rondeau, is also pretty talented. On p. 183 she managed to "catch" Kirk's face in cartoon form, a feat that the animated TV series was never able to accomplish. Vel, I liked your "Vulcan elders" drawing on p. 202; I think it's one of the cleverest things you've done. The one cartoonist I definitely do not like is Gennie Summers. She had a lot of stuff in ETERNAL TRIANGLE as well, and she's got only one joke in her repertoire: monsters. And it wasn't even funny the first time around. As for the intentionally serious art, I thought Bev Zuk's "That Certain Smile" on p. 103 was wonderful, but I don't understand why in one of the pictures Kirk has some sort of hood or cape on his head. Toni Hardeman's work looks amateurishly two-dimenstional, as if she has never been able to master the tricky business of perspective. Christine Myers' work is excellent as always. In particular I liked the Spock from "City" on p. 38, Kirk and Spock from "Amok Time" on p. 104, and the "Bread and Circuses" foldout on p. 125 (the latter fits the poem well). Perhaps my favorite artwork in the zine is the rich charcoal sketches of Barbara Walker. in the poetry section on pages 245 through 250 IED NOTE: these are actually pencil, done on a richly textured paper1.

I can't, of course, comment on every poem, but there are a couple that deserve mentions. "Thoughts on a Spring Night" offers that rarity, a sympathetic Klingon perspective. We tend to see the Klingons as complete bad guys without trying to understand their culture. Rowena Warner's "The Main Course" speaks a great truth, and its final sentence is an excapsulized explanation of why we all feel drawn to Star Trek. Elaine Tripp's "Perceptions" is disturbingly similar to my own "Puzzlement", so I suppose it was fortunate that the latter was dropped from this zine. [ED NOTE: "Puzzlement" is reprinted here, originally included in TREKisM #281. Speaking of my own work, I liked the way my poems were presented, but I really hated the title you stuck on David's letter; "Birthday Boy" sounds embarassingly puerile. I would have preferred it to remain untitled. [ED NOTE: This is the hazard of telling an editor, "You pick a title for it."] You printed a lot of poetry by the prolific Patt Demetri, whose work, though never brilliant or highly innovative, is always very readable and I enjoy it.

Warning: if I say any more fan stories bearing the title either "The Legacy" or "The Lesson," I shall scream! Come on, let's have a little originality here! Those tired titles seem to have become requisite components of fanzines, and they may be masking the value of the essentially good stories they're attached to.

About 75% [??? - our math results in only 30% - Ed] of the stories seemed to have a humorous bent, which is fine; a refreshing change from the maudiin fiction in a lot of ST zines. I am a sucker for Trek parodies, so I couldn't help but love "Star Trek: The Home Movie." The ending was clever, but too much of the beginning dialogue was word-for-word repetition of ST:TMP. "Cowards in the Daylight" was better; every bit as good as a Kiel Stuart parody, and that's high praise.

"A Fold in the Wolf" implies that most of the bizarre incidents that occured on the Enterprise were actually hoaxes perpetrated by the senior officers to cover up their own wrongdoings. It was not funny enough to be a parody, yet it had too much name-calling and slapstick to be straight fiction. I didn't care much for it. I also did not find much of Stephen Mendenhall's stuff particularly clever. However, I did like "Not out of the M\*\*D Yet". Hortas and Harry Mudd — what a combo! You were right to censor Mudd's name from the title; when he appeared, it was a real surprise for me. [ED NOTE — can't take credit for that: it was that author's (Peter Scott) ideal. Spoofs of the daily Enterprise routine, though funny, can grow tiresome after a while, so "Over the River and Through the Woods" [by Devery Helm] was a nice change, a satirical look at a thoroughly American holiday (which coincidentally was about to take place as I read the story). Fairly early in the reading of "It Hurts Too Much to

Cry\* (which seemed an inappropriate title), I suspected that the ring contained a Mensa symbol, but It didn't seem that it could be enough to provoke such extreme reactions in people. And Kirk and Spock seemed far too stupid and socially inept to be believable. "Unexpected Pleasure" [by V.L. Thorn] is yet another Sarek-meets-Amanda story with no new twists. Jean Lorrah's said it already, and with more skill. "And Be Alone or Earth" [by Karen Hunter] could have stood a sharper editorial pencil; there were some awkward sentences. But on the whole it was a plausible account of Kirk's relationship with Lori. The ending was too bland and low-key: "He turned and walked away." I was expecting Kirk to discover the truth about how she had deviously planned everything, and the final scene would have been one of shock and disillusionment. Far more dramatic.

In general, I loved it — the big blue book with our good doctor (and friends) on the cover. It gave me hours of happy reading. I was glad to be part of it and to be privileged to receive a copy.

#### BARBARA YANOSKO:

I got my copies in great order and they are fantastic! Vel, you and your crew did an incredible job. I enjoyed TaL 3 from cover to cover — even re-reading my story. Two stories were definitely "R" in this house" "An Unexpected Pleasure" and "By Sun and Candle-Light." I loved "A Fold in the Wolf" and so did my daughter, and "Cowards in the Daylight". I only wish I had it all to look forward to again. Thank you for your encouragement. My writing is taking its school year hiatus so it was a pleasure to see something in print.

#### ALLIE WERHAN:

It was my intention to leaf through TaL 3 and make a few comments about the parts I liked the best. Instead, I have been re-reading the whole thing. It pleases me greatly. I love LaVena's portfolio of convention-goers. Linda Brown's poem, "Midnight Soliloquy", reflects my own feeling, and longing, to be part of the distant future. The stories about the early lives of these people we love bring them familiarly close. It is almost as if, after reading one of the stories, that a memory had been triggered of the actual event. "Small Comforts [by Beth Carlson] was particularly delightful to me.

#### GINNA LACROIX:

I was a good kind and actually sat down and carefully read TREKISM AT LENGTH III, and quite enjoyed it. It's so nice to read an unreduced zine. So often I think my already bad eyes are completely shot, then I realize it's because almost all the zines are printed so small that I am resting my nose on the page ....

"And Be Alone on Earth" was my favourite story. I've found with almost all the stories that come after either of the motion pictures, I have to be in a mood where I feel like handling depression, and this story was no different. Karen handled the subject well, and made Lori a very real person, which I haven't seen done too often. Kirk is right on in the characterization, but he is so depressed! Each time I read a story like that, I really wonder how on earth he could give up the <a href="Enterprise">Enterprise</a>, and even though you know he gets her back, the suffering the poor man goes through! I wish Karen had said a little more about why Kirk felt he had to give up his command, but other than that, I wouldn't have changed a thing.

"When it Hurts Too Much to Cry" ran a very close second — again a beautiful story. Poor Spock! I found it a little hard to reconcile all the care and humour of the story with the way it ended, but other than that, no quarrel with anything.

"Barter the Stars" [by Barabar Yanosko] was also very good. Harker was a real bastard, and I was furious with Spock for being so meek and mild about his court martial. I think Kirk would have stormed around a little more and refused to accept what happened, but it wouldn't have worked in the frame of this particular story, so I let it go. Barbara did very well not to even hint that Spock's disgrace really was an undercover assignment, and not many people can do that. It was a good, tight story, nicely written, and really kept your attention. Maggle was a very good character. I find after reading enough stories that most characters tend to blend into one another after a while, but she really stood out.

"Deus ex Machina" [by Emily Ross] had a very good line, that Sppock was "drawn by a curiosity as basic to his nature as the need for food or shelter." How true.

"Mischief." Any thing referring to hazel eyes is great!

"Mind if I Join You" is nice, and how often we've seen it in fantic.

"By Sun and Candle-Light" was a very nice interpretation of what makes Spock the unique being he is. You don't often see a story analyzing the Vulcan as carefully and as well as this.

"A Fold in the Wolf" was delightful. Always you read about the heroes that make up our characters — this really presents them from the other point of view!!

"Saving the Captain's Royal ..." is one of the few stories that actually made me laugh out loud.
"Not out of the M\*\*d Yet" has a very good first line!

"M5 -- Again" I found very unsettling, and it had a great ending.

"Spock Experiments" and "Schemes and Counterschemes" were both very good.

"The Lesson" [by Robert Sayes] had an interesting thought, that only Humans would truly accept Saavik for what she is.

All in all, I think this was one of the better zines that I've read recently as far as overall quality and ability to keep interest story after story. Whenever I get a zine, the first thing I do is look at the art and then read the poetry, then I have to kick my butt and read the stories. Your zine really lived up to snuff visually, and the poetry section that started with "Perceptions" was really good, along with the accompanying art.

#### JIMMYE GALLI

I'm afraid this won't be an LoC of individual kudos; as a whole the zine is excellent so I'll only mention those unfamiliar to me of those whose works made a particular impression on my tastes.

Beth's writing, you know I love so I'll allow myself to appreciate "By Sun and Candle-Light."

(I'm a K/Ser first, a C/Ser second but I have little, or no, tolerance of Spock/any other woman stories.)

"Small Comforts" and "Nocturne" provide feelings of warmth and love, and "Saving the Captain's Royal,"

a good ole chuckle. Bless 'er heart.

I'm not familiar with Barbara J. Yanosko's work. If her writing has appeared in other zines, I don't remember. That's not criticism of her work but of my lousy memory. [ED NOTE: there's nothing wrong with your memory: this was Barbara's first story.] "Barter the Stars" is quite good. The plot has been done before (K or S as a spy) but Barbara's is well done! I hope to see more of her work. (Oh! and another point: she kept Stevers out of Kirk's bed, at least, outwardly).

I thought "When it Hurts Too Much to Cry" would be humorous, and it was, but with rather a heart-rending ending. (Does MENSA have a logo?)

"Who's Who at SF Conventions" was fun-nee. I've only been to one so far but I recognized a few representatives of same. By the way, Kidd's illos/cartoons are outstanding throughout the zine.

I have always loved Devery's humor. It's difficult not to appreciate it when at any time of day I can recall her having McCoy admonishing Kirk to "Quit fondling that cucumber." It causes a giggle every time.

Remember, ! said that the zine, as a whole, is excellent. Those works mentioned above are just particular favorites. As for the illos. Barbara Walker's illos are outstanding as is yours, of Kor. Christine Myers' "Spock" on page 38 is great, too. As for the editing, proofing, graphics — the donkey work — exceptional! Tal !!! is a good looking zine. So, thanks, Vel, to you, your "staff" and all your contributors for a good read. I'm looking forward to future issues. [ED NOTE: You're welcome \*\* Blush\*\*]

#### BETTY HIER:

... Sad to say, I was -- underimpressed -- by TaL 2 and 3, and don't think I'll be ordering any more TREKISM publications.

I don't for an instant doubt your contributors' sincerity or interest in Trek, or that as editors you and Vel try to put out the best possible zine you can get together. However, there's more to being able to write a good story or effective piece of poetry than the writer's I.Q. The better pieces in both zines were by NON-Mensans, people who contribute enough elsewhere to have honed their skills to produce a better product.

... TaL 2 and 3 weren't by any means bad; they just weren't enough to bring me back for more.

[ED NOTE -- This last letter is graphic proof that we've included all letters of commentary on TaL that consisted of anything longer than monosyllabic phrases. Far from being discouraged, we are more determined than ever to consistently improve.]



# **FANTASTIC REALMS**

This isperencicy this is fabous p.

THOST CEBENDS HAVE THEIR BASIS IN FACT.

... Thinks that cannot possibly exist - pet thep are undertably real.

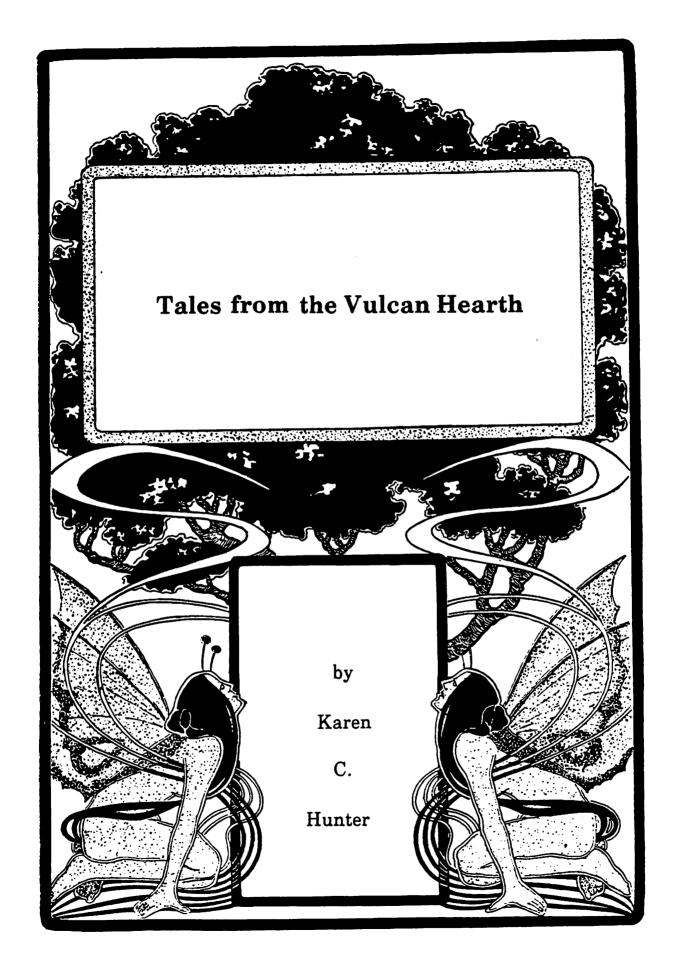
THANK THETHS ARE BASED IN TRUCK.

They are accusions oncy ... shabous upichout substance... for they be hot exast.

The thibse of what seems so wheeve, a harsh reacter ... This is hot a breath.



At some point in assembling TREKISM at Length III, I discovered the above illustration, and was determined to find a place for it in the zine somehow. Having an in-house poet with myself, it was no problem at all to let my whimsy loose and come up with x number of inches of copy. All I had to do was begin a thought with "what if", and the resulting speculation finished with "Vulcans really did have wings?" It is to my utter delight and joy that Karen Hunter has taken that moment of idle whimsy, and created and entirely new world from it — I am flattered more than I can say. These stories are only a small sampling of a whole book of Vulcan fantasy that Karen has written, published by Ann Crouch. TALES FROM THE VULCAN HEARTH is available for \$5 FC from Ann Crouch, RR#2. Box 144K, Missouri Valley IA 51555



# How the Vulcans Lost Their Wings

Dedicated to Vel: because she asked the right question at the right time.

In the dawn of our days, children, more years ago than even Vulcans can count, the sun above did not look the same, the ground beneath our feet was not so warm, and the nights were cool enough that mist might rise in the early dawn of the storm season. A long time ago that must be, does thee say? Indeed. And more has changed since the, because in those days Vulcans had wings.

Thee scoffs, yet I say to thee, it is true and cannot be denied. It is as my grandmother told me, and her grandmother told her, and so on back to those cooler days. Will thee doubt the honor of my grandmother? Listen, child, if thee will gain wisdom.

There lived in those days a boy. I do not know how old he was, for they did not know the passing of the seasons as do we, and no one bothered to count his days. Impossible, thee says? Child, if thee keeps interrupting, we shall never learn how he lost his wings. Let us say then that he was old enough to be an adult, though that meant many more things than it does today. But for all that, he was still a boy, and having not yet learned wisdom. And beacuse his grandmother was very proud of him, he was not required to study or work as were the other children of his clan, but was allowed to wander and learn much on his own. In truth, he would have done this even if not allowed, because the company of others meant very little to him — except for one other.

This boy ... what? Thee wishes him to have a name? Very well, we shall call him Selock, which meant Boy in those days. This boy, Selock, had a very good friend whom we shall call S'hy'la, which meant Friend. S'hy'la was a very different sort of boy, one who could have had all the friends he wished, for all the others admired him and followed his lead in all the games and aventures. For thee sees, in those days the friendship of age-mates was desired above many other needs. Yet in the end, S'hy'la chose instead to follow Selock instead of having many other boys to follow him.

Thee must remember, children who hear my words, that these boys both had wings. They were much like the wings we see now on the Silver Birds, slender and graceful, yet able to carry a great weight. The People were able to fly quite well as small children but slowly lost this ability as they aged. Eventually they could only fan themselves against the heat of the dry season. But for boys and girls of thy age — seven or eight summers — wings were a joy for every day. The children in those days did not go to school but learned their lessons at home. Parents who remembered their own days of flying and knew how swiftly it would end usually allowed at least one season when flying was unhindered. So the hills outside of every town would be filled with the adventuresome climbing to great heights to take advantage of the thermals which rose under the sun.

Yes, child, that is so. Thee does much the same these days with hang-gliders. It is because one day a long time ago we ourselves flew that we still allow that one time of flying.

The season that Selock and S'hy'la were eight years old or so, the weather was particularly fine. Each day the children would come out to the hills, sometimes a small group, sometimes more; but always Selock and S'hy'la were there. Each day as the sun rose and the thermals lifted the air higher, the two boys flew further and further from their village. High in the sky, against the haze of the sun, the parents watched their children fly. Always the two highest were Selock and S'hy'la. One day Selock's grandmother asked him why that was so.

"We wish to reach the stars," he told her.

Gently she told him that the stars could not be reached. They were not places, just lights shining through from the land of the gods. Of course, thee knows better than Selock's grandmother, but that is what all believed in those days. Yet Selock did not believe her. He insisted that the stars were a place and the he and S'hy'la would someday go there.

As the days passed slowly and the time of hunting was approaching, all the children knew that the free days of flying were ending. But Selock and S'hy'la kept trying. Earlier and earlier each day they would arise and try for the heights, yet they came no closer to the stars.

Finally S'hy'la said that it must be that the sun was in the way, and they would have to try at night, which seemed logical to Selock. So that night, as the heat rose from the sands as it does in our day even now, the two boys crept from their tents and climbed to the best spot for launching themselves into the sky.

It seemed very odd to them in the dark, and at first they kept very close to each other. But as their courage grew, and the strange feeling of the night air grew less, they climbed ever higher until at last they came ot a star.

Unlike what his grandmother had thought, the stars were not just lights. Unlike what the boys expected, the stars were not other worlds. I do not know exactly what the boys found when they came there. It was certainly not a star such as thee has studied in school. The boys saw only a small part of it, which seemed to be a shimmering sort of place with a wide pool of water in the center. Beside the pool sat a girl about their own age, with dark hair that came to her knees.

The boys flew around the water and looked at the girl, and she looked at them. Yet she could not join them, for she did not have wings.

"Why is thee here?" she asked them.

"We wanted to see the stars," S'hy'la answered.

Selock asked, "Who is thee? Where are thy wings?"

Her name was T'Prys, which meant Girl in those days. She showed them around this land that her father had made for her. It seemed strange and fascinating to the boys, but she wanted to go see their land. She did not know how this could be possible.

The boys thought they could try to carry her, so together the three flew up, with her carried between them. Yet it grew difficult to fly, and the boys' wings touched often. They could not glide easily as they had each done alone, and her weight grew heavy for them after the long journey there.

They were alone in the dark, and when they looked back towards the stars, none of them could tell which light was hers. So they had to fly back to Vulcan whether they wished to or not. That was easy to tell from the other stars, for it was large and red and very hot. It drew them closer.

After awhile it seemed to them that they flew less and less, but glided more. It was easier, for they could rest their wings. Now it was dawn, and there were no more thermals to aid them. Soon they were plunging down to the ground.

T'Prys struggled to break free from them both, so that alone they might aid themselves, and each boy trying to carry her weight so that his friend might be free. Yet they had flown too far and stayed away too long. They tumbled to the ground, all three together, and landed in a pile of wings and limbs.

Selock's grandmother found them there in the morning, when she went to look for him. His friend and the girl were both dead, but Selock still lived, his wings crumpled and torn beneath him.

"You should not have gone, child," she said as she lifted him.

"It was wonderful," he said, thinking only of the night stars and the cool winds as he flew with his friend.

"Who is the girl thee has found?" his grandmother asked.

"She lived on the star and wanted to see our land. We could not take her home." He shuddered, and his grandmother knew he would soon die.

"Perhaps now you know why you should not fly to the stars," she said. "You are too young and do not know enough."

Selock closed his eyes and remembered. Even the plunge and the fear of death did not seem so bad compared to the joy he had felt all summer and in that night in particular. "I would do it again," he said, and then he died.

But his grandmother, who had never flown as high as he, could not understand. And she grieved for him and his broken wings. And she cursed the loss of her beloved child and wished that Vulcans did not have wings. And her wish was heard by the sky god whose daughter had just died because of wings. And her wish was answered.

So from that day to this, Vulcans have not had wings.



# The Sky God's Daughter

And now, dear child, does thee ask, tell us the tale of how the sky god lost his daughter? It is also a sad tale from the Time of the Beginning, when Vulcan was cooler and the sun further away. In those days, the gods lived in close companionship with The People. They were like us in many ways but wiser and kinder, while The People fought and died and hated. Yet they were our friends and helped us when they could. The kindest of the gods was the sky god, who brought the gentle early rains and kept the harsh Time of Storms from destroying the world.

Thee would not know one of the gods if thee saw one, for they looked just like The People do now, except that they also had wings. There were no females, or goddesses, for all the power of our land was in our own people. So the gods married Vulcan women and partook of the female magic in that way. But it was a grief to them that we lived so much shorter a time than did they.

In this time, the sky god had not had a wife for a long time. He was very lonely, and many women wished to be his wife. Yet while he went with one or the other, none seemed to satisfy him. Some of these women bore him sons; eventually one bore him a daughter, a small, dark-haired being that looked up to her father and knew him from the moment of her birth. He might have married that woman, perhaps, but she died, as is often the way after birth, and the sky god now had only his small daughter.

When she was one year old and he was sure she would live, the sky god held a naming day celebration. All the other gods came, with the customary splendid gifts, for it had been many years since a god had fathered a daughter. And, as was the custom, each looked into her eyes and made a prophecy. The water god told that she would be able to swim as a fish; the earth god told she would be able to grow any plant that she wished; on and on the gods spoke, telling the wonderful gifts this child possessed. Finally it came the turn of the wind god. He looked into her eyes and was sad.

"She will die very young," he said. "She will die because of wings, and because of that I will not be able to save her." He covered his face and went away quickly.

The sky god could not accept that. He loved his daughter very fiercely and could not bear that she would die. So to save her, he did a terrible thing. He magicked away her wings. Then he took to a special place where no one could find her, a beautiful place in his sky realm where the wind god did not come. All the other gods brought something of their own to her there, beautiful pools, graceful trees — things that have not been seen on Vulcan since that time. But the wind god hid his face and would not come.

Because the girl was partly a god, she grew very slowly. After many years, her father was sure he had denied the prophecy. At first he spent all his time with her, but gradually he took to spending more and more time on Vulcan with The People, seeing that they had rain enough and light enough that they might live — just as he had always done. He wished he could take his daughter there with him, but she could not fly and he feared to take her. Away from the power of the place he had made for her, she might yet be killed.

Finally the summer came when the girl was old enough, as thee are today at eight summers old, to be thought adult. He father prepared for her the most beautiful summer she could imagine, so wonderful that even on Vulcan the days were clear and the evenings filled with the sky lights. At the end of the summer, when the sky god retired his care of the land to the storm god, he planned a great celebration. He told her all about what would come. But he was gone much of the time to prepare, and the girl grew lonely.

One day she sat beside her beautiful pool, singing to herself and longing for her father, when she looked up and saw two distant shapes coming nearer and nearer. After awhile they landed, and she saw that they were two children like herself. The were males, like her father and the gods, but though they had wings, they were not gods.

"We are from Vulcan," they told her. She remembered her father's tales of The People, and she longed very much to see them for herself. Because she was partly a god and possessed very strong female magic, the boys decided to take her back to Vulcan with them.

Now, this girl did not know she had been born with wings, but as she rose into the sky, held in the boys' arms, it felt to her as if she were where she belonged. For awhile they rose quite easily as the boys' powerful wings took them back to their own planet. The girl was content, the three gliding together in the soft, night breezes of her planet.

Soon they passed from the influence of her little world, and the wind grew less. The night grew cold, and Vulcan became hotter and closer. The boys began to struggle, and their grip grew less strong. Now she felt helpless in the boys' arms and longed to fly for herself. But she could not. The girl feared she would kill them all, and she tried to push them away from her.

The first boy tried to take her to himself, that this friend might have more strength to live; and the friend did not allow that, but also tried the same. Neither would allow her to fall away by herself, as she sought to do.

So together the three plunged ever more quickly to Vulcan, landed on the sand, and died because two sets of wings are not enough to carry three souls.

In the morning the sky god came to his daughter's place to awaken her, and she was gone. He searched the tiny world and knew that somehow she had left. Quickly he called the other gods to see if one of them had taken her, but none had. In despair he went to the last place to seek and found her on Vulcan. With her were two boys of The People and an old grandmother who held them and cursed the wings that had brought them to their deaths.

The sky god, unseen, landed beside her and joined in her curse. And cursed himself, that he had caused her death because he took away her wings. In thinking to outwit fate, he had only outwitted himself.

The celebration for her adulthood became instead a funeral for the last daughter of the gods. Each of the gods left Vulcan and came to the girl's place in the sky. Last of all came the wind god, who had known what would happen and could not prevent it. All the gods grieved together in the little world the sky god had made.

Now all the gods never came back to Vulcan, and since that day the storms go uncontrolled, the rains do not have a master, and none of The People have wings. And it is all because of the day the sky god lost his daughter.



# The Gift of the Gods

It is an old saying of The People that music is what distinguishs us from the animals. Yet, in the Time of the Beginning, this was not so. The People had no music, for they had their flying and they did not need to sing or dance. But when the flying was lost to them and the new babies born did not have wings, The People grieved for a very long time.

There lived at this time a very poor boy named Sorche. His father had been a hunter who was killed by a lematya, and his mother had died when he was born. Because Sorche was almost ten years old, he was able to care for himself. But his people were not well-off, and no one was able to help him.

Once in awhile he was able to earn some bread by working for others of the tribe. One old man in particular liked to have Sorche come and card the fleece from his herds so he could sell the yarn. However, this was a very stingy man and he demanded a great deal of work for even one small portion of bread and cheese. Yet Sorche did not mind. It was work, and he was young. He always knew that things would be better. He was a boy with a kind heart.

When it came time for the young to be born in the herd, the old one promised Sorche one of the kids in exchange for his help. Sorche knew he would be given only one young male, but he again did not mind for it would be a start. Someday he would have herds as large as could be imagined. Perhaps, child, you can see that this boy was too imaginative and not very shrewd. But it turned out well in the end.

What happened was this. After all the young were born, a sickness came to the herd. All the new males died and all but three of the females. The old one told Sorche that for all his work, there was nothing left to pay him, and he sent Sorche on his way with only some cheese and bread, his usual payment.

It was a stormy and windy night, and Sorche was cold and hungry with no place to go. He was discouraged and thought perhaps he should find some other place to live, where his efforts would be rewarded more justly. He started to walk down the side of the mountain, but then he thought he could hear a cry. Sorche looked around, and by the tiny stream that ran down the hillside, he saw a small figure. It was a little old woman.

He did not know who she was, but she was very tiny and seemed to be caught. Sorche went over

and saw that a boulder had fallen on her foot. He pushed it away and helped her to stand. Then he brought her to the shelter of his cloak and gave her some bread and cheese to warm herself after the ordeal.

The old woman thanked him and asked him what he was doing out on such a stormy night, when the lightning flashed across the peaks and the lematya screamed in the hunt. So he told her all his troubles.

She was a very good listener and then said, "Come with me, boy. I shall give thee a job and shall pay thee fairly for thy help. I need a herdboy and a carder for one year."

Things could hardly be worse for Sorche, so he agreed to go with her. It puzzled him that he had never seen her before, though he thought he knew the mountains for miles around. They walked for a long time, through the night until the land was no longer familiar and the air had a different smell. Then they found a tiny house, so small that if he had been full grown he could not have gone in the door.

There was not much to tell about the year that followed. Sorche worked very hard, but the work was the same as he had done before. The tiny woman gave him all he wanted to eat, a comfortable bed, and time to think his own thoughts. Finally the time came for Sorche to be paid. The old woman held out a small bag of gold in one hand, and in the other she held a strangely shaped box. "Thee may choose thy payment," she told him. "Here is gold enough for thee to go to ZanDahr and buy thy own herd. Or, thee may choose this."

She set down the gold and ran her hand lightly over the box. To Sorche's astonishment, a sound arose as her hand moved. It sounded to him as though all the Silver Birds in the woods had sung for one moment. He held out his hand. "I shall take that," he said.

She handed him the box. "It is called a lyre. If thee will stay another year, as thy payment I shall teach thee how to make the sounds."

"I shall stay," he said. So for another year, Sorche stayed and worked for the woman. Each day he cared for the herd, and each night she showed him the secrets of the magic box. At the end of the year, Sorche was very good at bringing forth the music, and new tunes the woman did not know were running through his mind. He was eager to be alone and work on those tunes. But this time the woman said, "If thee stays another year, I shall teach thee another new thing."

Sorche was very eager to have the lyre all to himself, but he wanted to know this other new thing as well. He stayed, and this time the woman began to dance. Sorche had never seen dancing, but he knew at once that it belonged with the music from his lyre. This year less of the work was done and more music was played. Sometimes Sorche would wonder how such an old woman could move so easily to the music he made for her. But when he himself danced, he forgot all he knew or thought about her and was one with the music.

At the end of that year, the old woman said, "There is yet one more thing thee does not know. Yet it takes but a moment to tell. Thy people do not tell poems, but down on the plains there is a tribe who speaks words that will fit with music. Now take the lyre, thy new learning, and this bag of gold and go to them. Learn of their bards the epic stories. Then thee will have found what thee is to do with thy life."

Sorche looked at the bag of gold and then at the old woman. "All this because I saved thee from a wetting and a cold night three years ago? It does not seem an equal exchange."

"No," she told him, "not because thee saved me, but because the first time thee chose, thee made a good choice. And the second time thee chose, again thee chose correctly." She rose and for a moment she seemed to change. Her cloak dropped to the floor beside her, the white hair once again was black, and her limbs were straight and strong. "I am the first daughter of the gods," she said. "My father is the wind god, powerful and strong in these mountains. He fathered me many and many years ago, when The People were new to Vulcan." She turned and Sorche's eyes widened in surprise, for she still had wings.

"Because I am the first daughter of the gods, I have lived for a very long time. The gift of music was mine from the Beginning, but I had no one to give it to. All my children and their children and their children for many years have died. Thee is the last, the only one left on Vulcan who comes from my line. The music is thine by right, but I would teach thee only if thee were worthy. Thee have shown that thee is truly my child. Now, go, and teach thy people what they have need of. Bring them music, song, and dance to forget that they, too, once had wings.

She bent down and picked up her cloak. She was a tiny old woman with tears in her eyes.
"I cannot leave thee," Sorche told her. "Thee needs me still to tend the herds and cook thy

bread."

"There is no more need. I have done what I intended to do. Go to thy people and leave me to my fate."

So Sorche rose and took his pack, his clothes, and his lyre across his back. The old woman lay back on her bed, with her eyes closed. He bent over and with two fingers touch her cheek softly. Then he walked quickly away. He did not look back for a long time, until he reached the bend in the river that took him out of sight. Then as he took one last look, he saw that the house was no longer there. Everything was gone where he had lived for three years.

Sorche thought of the people on the plains and the poems and epics they had to teach him. He pulled forth his lyre and made a song to the first daughter of the gods, as he walked out of the mountains bringing new joy to The People.





by V.L. Thorn

Once, they bathed in evening dew, Played amongst the moonbeams; drew Knowledge from the rocks and trees, Befriended hummmingbirds and bees.

Once, they hid from sunbeams' burn, Slept beneath the drooping fern; Dined on honey, nuts and milk, Robed in softspun spider silk.

Elves: mischievous, fairy sprites
Developed wings for prankish flights
Until catastrophe occured,
Scattering feathered friends and furred ...

\* \* \*

Frail gossamer limbs bore them far Beyond their shattered, pulsing star To a planet warm and dry Shrouded with a burning sky.

Wee, fragile folk evolved and grew, Shedding wings and shyness through Centuries of sacrifice: Survival at a mortal price ...

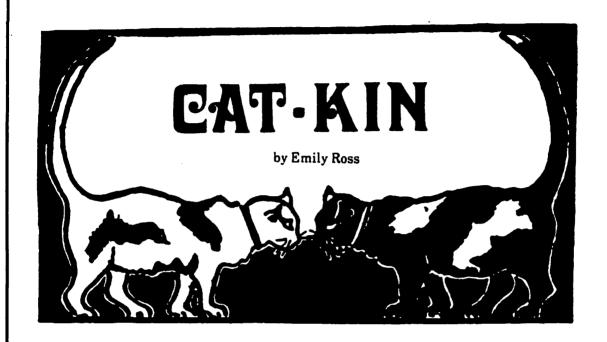
Metagenesis profaned
Lilliputian, impish mien —
Vuicans prospered logically,
Tall and wingless, wild and free.

Pale green skin and pointed ears Bred true through progenetic peers; But elfin spirit, damned, repressed, Cast them cold ... emotionless ...

Humans came — a rueful bane —
Shattering logic without shame,
Disturbing dim, pre-Vulcan lore
Foregone ...

Forgotten ...
Heretofore ...

-- V.L. Thorn



Slanted eyes and pointed ears,
Serenity beyond your years,
The quiet strength and easy grace
Distinctive of your feline race,
A solemn poise and dignity
Let slip, now and again, for me;
Sharer of my home and hearth,
Are you truly of this earth?

Pointed ears and slanted eyes
Looking fathomless and wise,
Gazing out -- or is it in?
To where nobody else has been;
Born a gypsy, roaming free,
Yet now content to stay with me
Closely in my heart-strings curled;
Are you truly of this world?



# THESE ARE THE VOYAGES

In this galaxy, there's a mathematical probability of three million Earth-type planets, And in all of the universe, three million, million, galaxies like this one. But in all of that, and perhaps more, only one of each of us.

All men are brothers.

We are a most proinising species, as predators go.

I am pleased to see that we have differences, May we together become greater than the sum of both of us.

Peace was the way,

### Pandora's Bowl

#### by Suzan Lovett

The honor guard, resplendent in full parade uniform, smartly saluted the couple and offered his arm to the lady. Cadet James T. Kirk surrendered his date to the guard for the ceremonial procession up the steps to the banquet hall and followed, feeling very pleased with himself in his own full Mess regalia.

He tried to keep his eyes straight ahead and not on Ruth's hips which swayed so enticingly going up the steps in front of him. She was dressed in something that flowed and hugged at the same time and looked lovely. It made Kirk almost wish for the banquet to draw to a quick close so he could have her all to himself, but he'd worked hard to earn the privilege to attend and he was going to enjoy it.

There would be little time to enjoy himself once he got to Cygni 2, where Starfleet Academy's Command Staff College was located. The dine-out was in honor of the Academy graduates who had clawed their way into being accepted for command training, as well as the last batch of graduates from the Command College who were back on Earth to receive their assignments; in most cases it would be their first deep space assignment. In two years, Kirk swore to himself, he'd be back to attend a similar banquet among the latter, and wearing ensign rank.

The procession slowed down at the entrance to the banquet hall as guests signed the attendance register. When their turn came the guard did an about face, saluted Kirk, and returned his date to him. They spoke simultaneously.

"Oh, Jim, it's beautiful."

"Oh, damn, a Grog Bowl!"

Kirk, eyeing the huge bowl sitting on a solitary table in the middle of the dance floor, wished he could just take one of the tables to the back — way, way back, preferably — but he wasn't a casual guest and a central table was assigned to Command College elects.

"A ... what bowl?" Ruth asked.

"A Grog Bowl. And if you think the name is bad, you ought to taste what's in it." Having located their name cards, he motioned her to the correct place, then put a restraining hand on her arm when she started to pull her chair back. "Not yet. We can't sit until the colors are posted and the head table is seated."

"Oh. Can we talk at least?"

"Yes, if you whisper." Eyes ahead, standing at parade rest, he looked absurd, and Ruth started to chuckle.

"Sssshh!" Kirk admonished.

"I'm sorry. Everyone looks so solemn, I can't help it."

"Ruth!"

"All right, all right." She composed herself and tried to find another topic. "What is a Grog Bowl?"
"A time-honored tradition, dating back to the British armies of the eighteen century. They usually
have one during dine-ins. A 'dine-in' is a banquet only active duty personnel are allowed to attend.
The one you can bring a date to is a 'dine-out', like tonight. It's rare to find a Grog Bowl at a dineout."

"So what is it?"

"They put that bowl there in the morning and everyone who passes by adds something to it. Everything alcoholic and other stuff, like hot sauce, pepper, garlic powder, salt ... anything not illegal that a fiendish imagination can contrive."

Ruth was looking at the vile-colored liquid with apprehension.

"Don't worry; civilians are immune, but if anyone has it in for me, you may have to carry back a very sick and drunk date. Here," he motioned at the little booklets that were gracing every table

setting, "read all about it while we wait."

Ruth skimmed over the protocol booklet which informed her a President of the Mess would be ruling over the banquet. He could only be addressed through the Vice of the Mess who would be performing a function similar to a Master of Ceremonies. Microphones were placed at various locations through which one could make issues public and direct requests or questions to the head table. No one was even allowed to stand while the diners at the head table were seated except to go to the microphones; leaving the hall required permission from the President; the head table dictated the pace of the meal ... the list of restrictions seemed endless.

Ruth stifled a yawn and searched for the Grog Bowl entry. Its presence seemed incongrouous among all the strict rules and regulations, and she wanted to know what purpose it served. The comic relief, she decided, after she read further and realized it would be a whip at the President's hands. Divergence from regulations of the banquet, noticed by the President or brought to his attention by anyone, would be punished by making the guilty party partake of the concoction.

There were strict rules governing that event, too. The person was required to march to the Bowl, salute the Bowl, fill a cup to the brim, execute an about face salute the head table, verbally acknowledge the President, drain the liquid in one swallow, put the cup upside down on his/her head, salute the President, do another about face, salute the Bowl yet again, put the cup down and march back. Any faltering in following the procedure required the poor soul to start all over again until the President pronounced himself satisfied.

Ruth, visualizing Jim going through the described antics, started giggling again.

"Sssshh!" She was reprimanded once more. She looked at him with amusement. He could be so carefree, so mischievous at times, and at other times he could be very much a prig. She loved him anyway.

Pipes blared and everyone came to attention. The high ranking officers which would make up the head table came in — no marching for them — and took positions behind their seats. The music got louder and someone snapped orders. It sounded like barking to Ruth, rather than words. Parade costumed guards entered with United Federation Planets, Starfleet Armed Forces, Academy, and Command College flags to solemnly place them behind the VIPs. They marched out, the President pounded the gavel, declared the Mess open, and everyone was allowed to sit.

Not for long though; Ruth no sooner touched her chair than everyone was jumping up again as toast after toast was proposed for one purpose or another, for this dignitary and that bigwig — some not even in attendance — and she was repeatedly back on her feet, sipping her wine along with everybody to the chorus of "Hear, Hear."

Finally things settled down and waiters began placing salads on the tables. Having learned her lesson, Ruth waited until the people at the head table had started eating. Kirk smiled at her appreciatively; she was getting the hang of it. He remembered the tablecloth extended to the floor on the front side of the table and moved his leg so it was touching hers. She glanced up and discreetly winked. Then her hand moved off the table to her lap, promising further roving. Uh-uh, not advisable, Kirk decided, and hastily pulled his leg back.

Now that he was free to turn his head, Kirk started looking through the crowd for familiar faces. The head table occupied one side of the dance floor behind the Grog Bowl, with two other long tables angled opposite the head table so the occupants were facing the command officers. At one sat the Academy graduates on their way to Command College; at the other, those lucky people who had already paid their dues at that college.

Kirk recognized some of his upperclassmen among them. There were a few older graduates, having wrested the right to attend Command College after some years of service. There was only one female in uniform at that table. It had obviously taken her a long time to convince Starfleet of her potential; she already were the rank of a lieutenant commander.

There were a few aliens as well. One was a Taurean. The only reason Kirk knew he was an alien was because they were acquainted; he looked much like a short, stocky Human. There was only one Vulcan and one Andorian; neither familiar to Kirk. He noticed an empty chair at that table and wondered why until he realized the Vulcan didn't have a date with him. Vulcans did not indulge in the Human custom of "dating" and the men rarely appeared in public accompanied by a female unless married, but Starfleet operated on Human assumptions.

Kirk twisted around and scanned the other tables occupied by various Starfleet personnel and their guests. Some people smiled or waved at him. He smiled back, foregoing any waving; with a Grog Bowl in attendance he wasn't about to make himself conspicuous by expansive moves. He knew the President of the Mess for the night: Commodore Barnes, who had a sense of humor which sometimes bordered on the

sadistic -- when he wasn't being pompous.

The inauguration of the Grog Bowl was not long in coming. A late-arriving lieutenant trying to sneak into one of the back seats was spied by the watchful commodore. "Mr. Vice!" he boomed.

"Yes, sir!" The ensign assigned to the gratuitous task for the night hastily gulped down his mouthful and snapped to attention, trying to speak past the piece of lettuce that seemed to have become wrapped around his windpipe.

"Are my eyes deceiving me, or do we have a laggard among the distinguished company tonight?"

"Uh ... p ... pardon me, Mr. President?" the ensign stammered, having missed the stealthy entrance of the tardy lieutenant.

"Mr. Vice, I'm disappointed in you. Remind me never to recommend you for an Intelligence Service posting. You will at once determine the identity of the person who was unwise enough to enter this hall after the head table has been seated, and bring him up for charges."

A few helpful souls started to point out the culprit to the silently desperate ensign, but the lieutenant had already decided to take his own medicine as he marched to a microphone.

"Lieutenant Tershkova, Headquarters Communication," he identified himself.

"Hmmm," the President studied the man. "Promptness is a virtue all Starfleet officers are expected to know; if they don't know it, they'll be taught."

"Yes, sir, Mr. President. I apologize. My air car--"

"Now my ears must be deceiving me! Are you attempting to offer an excuse before one was asked of you? You've just compounded your offense. Do you know what your punishment is?

"Yes, sir. I'm afraid so, sir."

A most satisfying laughter was rippling through the audience. Barnes started to warm up to his subject. "Oh, my, my, my! You do, eh? Mr. Vice, remind this ill-advised person of his manners."

The ensign faltered and made a wild guess. "Lieutenant, you're presuming by indicating you know what your sentence is before the President has verbalized it."

"That's right, Mister," the commodore nodded solemnly. "A good officer never usurps a superior's authority. You will now partake of the Grog Bowl. And you, Mr. Vice," he added, and the relieved grin on the ensign's face faded, "will accompany him to learn to keep your eyes open. Every good officer must know the meaning of vigilance. What will this proceeding come to if its guardians are not on their toes?"

The laughter became uproarious as the two officers marched to the Grog Bowl and were given endiess hell for failing to follow procedures in perfect orchestration, and had to dip into the bowl twice before they got it right.

"Hey, this isn't as straightlaced as I thought," Ruth commented to Kirk. "I think I'm going to enjoy myself."

"Yeah. Long as I'm not the one downing that disgusting stuff, it's all right."

Soon more hapless souls trudged to the bowl for a multitude of sins. One was caught yawning and Barnes made much of the implied insult to the dignitaries, the gathering, all the way to the honor of the Fleet. Someone else dropped a knife, committing the unthinkable crime of implying that Starfleet offices were not perfectly coordinated. Another hadn't aligned his medals just right. It went on and on. Kirk, safe himself so far, was enjoying the spectacle thoroughly. It seemed the commodore had made his way up the ranks and was now intent on bedeviling the high command officers over whom his title of President of the Mess also gave him full control for the night.

Ruth was surprised that admirals with enough brass to be considered overweight cargo on spaceships would allow themselves to be so abused until Kirk explained it was accepted as good PR. Grace and humor was a must.

They were in the middle of the main course, hilarity at its highest, when a Command College graduate marched to a microphone. "Mr. Vice, Ensign Wallace. A point of order, please?" The Vice asked the President if he would care to recognize Ensign Wallace, which the commodore graciously did.

"Sir, isn't the ability to follow orders to the letter the mark of a good officer?"
"It certainly is, Ensign."

The man held up an invitation card to the banquet. "Mr. President, these invitations carry the official Starfleet seal and are signed by the Commanding Admiral. As far as I can determine, that makes them orders. Would the President agree?"

"The President never agrees until he knows exactly what he's agreeing to, Ensign. I'll hold judgement while you make your point."

"Sir, these invitations are for two people. The officer it is addressed to and 'party'. Seems to me the officer in question is under orders to be accompanied."

"Hmmm. Let's say he is. Go on."

"There is an officer of the Fleet here tonight who has blatently disregarded a direct order from the Admiralty and is attending this dine-out alone. He is being insubordinate to the concept of dine-out."

All eyes were on the Vulcan who was so obviously the point of contention; the empty chair at one of the main tables made an obvious gap.

"I see what you mean, Ensign. Point well taken, i'd say. The accused will rise and identify himself."

The Vulcan had been staring straight ahead. Now he rose, went to the microphone and complied the way Vulcans did everything — calmiy and with precision. "Ensign Spock, Command Staff College graduate, as yet to be assigned to a functional unit."

"Are you alone at this dine-out, Ensign?" Barnes asked

"No, sir."

That brought the President up short. "Oh? Is she invisible then? Explain yourself, Ensign."

"There are twenty-eight people, minus myself, at my table, and we have been informed that 327 in total are attending the banquet without counting the honor guards, the musicians, and the waiters. I am certainly not alone at this dine-out."

More laughter followed, but this time the commodore knew it was at his own expense. "Are you dithering with me, Ensign?"

"You have asked an imprecise question that I have answered as accurately as possible within its context. I fail to see why I should be asked if I am dithering."

Kirk leaned back to get a good look at the Vulcan, the first of Barnes' victims who seemed able to give as good as he got.

Barnes was not amused; control was no longer firmly in his hands. "Very well, Ensign. Are you personally accompanying a spouse, a date, or a colleague — who is here under your escort and not out of duty — of female persuasion?"

"No, sir, I am not."

"And why is that, Ensign?"

"In order, sir; I do not have a spouse, much less one who is presently on Terra. I do not personally know a female on Earth well enough to ask for a date even if it was established practice in my culture. My colleagues at the Academy have been assigned elsewhere while I have been at the Command Staff College. The only female graduate of that school present at the moment is accompanied by her own fiancee."

The commodore foundered; the tone was turning serious and that wasn't acceptable, especially when he was at the losing end of the exchange. "Oh, that won't do. It won't do at all. Tell the ensign why it won't do, Mr. Vice."

The Vice, suddenly finding himself in the limelight again, groped for straws. "Well, Mr. President, Ensign Spock's arguments sound plausible, but we can't discount the precedence set by two of his colleagues. Representatives of two other races are honoring us at the Command College graduates' table tonight. Their situation is similar to the ensign's, yet both seem to have found charming companions on our planet to accompany them."

"Yery true, Mr. Vice." Barnes quickly appropriated control again now that he had been given an idea. "Sometimes perseverance and ingenuity are called for to follow orders, Ensign. You have failed to display the necessary determination to live up to the letter of your invitation. You will now follow the Grog Bowl procedure."

Kirk thought he saw a minute hesitation in the Vulcan, but he marched to the table without further ado; once the President passed sentence, there was no way to appeal. He went through the steps with precision and laughter ran unchecked. Kirk laughed along with the rest; it had been a viliant fight but doomed to failure, and the picture of a Vulcan with a cup upside down on his head was too hilarious a sight to resist.

The Vulcan was halfway back to his table when Barnes' voice interrupted. "Ensign, that cup didn't look quite full to me. Come back and do it right this time."

Kirk saw the Vulcan tense for a brief instant before he turned to comply once again. When the commodore interfered yet another time to ask the ritual to be repeared because the ensign had paused halfway through drinking and had to drain the cup in two swallows, Kirk lost all desire to laugh. The rest of the guests were rolling with mirth. He felt better when the Vulcan was allowed to return to his table unmolested after the third time. After awhile, he leaned forward to look at the alien ensign. The Vulcan was pushing at his food, eyes fixed somewhere on the table over his plate. Vulcans weren't drinkers, Kirk thought — if that vile concoction could be called a drink — he was probably feeling

queasy.

Ruth touched his arm and Kirk gave his attention to her. She wanted to discuss the weeklong trip they would be taking before Kirk had to leave Earth.

After the main course, a speech was given by the Commandant of the Academy and each Command College-bound graduate was recognized and commended. Dessert was passed around.

"Mr. Vice?" Sombody was at the microphone again. "Ensign Carducci, Headquarters Finance and Accounting Division. May I be recognized by the Chair?" After the commodore saw fit to give him the go-ahead, the ensign continued, "Mr. President, may I be excused?"

"Excused? What infraction of what regulation have you committed for which you wish to be excused?"

The speech had put a damper on the mood and Barnes had decided it was time to liven things up a bit.

"None that I'm aware of, sir. I wish to be excused from the banquet hall for a short while, with the President's permission, in accordance to the rules governing this gathering."

"Why didn't you say so in the first place, Ensign?" There are those of us who are enamored of accuracy in this hall. What is the reason for asking this permission?"

"Sir, ... it's personal, sir."

"Insufficient answer, Ensign." Barnes pushed, knowing full well why the man wanted to be excused. So did everyone else; amusement seemed to be on the rise. "You know you need a good justification to leave the hall while the head table is still seated."

"Sir, the food was good, the drinks plentiful. Surely the President recognizes the ... uh ... natural order of things."

"I see, input and output. Tell me, Ensign, has the 'natural order of things' taken a turn for emergency?"

By this time laughter was running rampant and the ensign decided he might as well contribute to it. "It is fast getting there, sir."

"Well, we certainly have to do something about that. But we can't arbitrarily give out permissions on the say-so of one individual. The accuracy of data has to be confirmed. Let's see, who's the best person ...? Oh, yes. Ensign Spock, present yourself."

Here goes, Kirk thought. Commodore Barnes was known for not letting go once he got his teeth into someone. The Vulcan obeyed.

"What is your field of interest, Ensign?" Barnes questioned, knowing the answer; Vulcans were predictable.

"Sciences."

"Good. Then you can appreciate the need for accurate data. Provide escort service to Ensign Carducci and confirm the emergency aspects of the situation. We'll wait for your report, after the fact though it will necessarily have to be."

The Vulcan froze. The rest of the guests also seemed to be holding their breath while waiting for his reaction.

"Sir, I refuse."

Kirk wanted to cheer. Of course the Vulcan was going to get stomped on but, by the Galaxy, he was going to go down fighting.

"You're refusing a direct order from the President of this Mess?"

"Affirmative."

"I see. Ensign Carducci, you're excused. Mr. Spock, what am I going to do with you? A good officer has to learn to obey commands. Do you know the penalty for not having learned your lesson?"

"You will no doubt inform me momentarily, sir."

"To the Grog Bowl, Mister, and get it right this time."

Kirk busied himself with his food, not wanting to watch.

"Jim?" Ruth asked, noticing his withdrawal.

"It isn't funny, Ruth."

"I thought you said this was all accepted, in good humor?"

"Yes, but not him. He's a Vulcan. And not like this. It's turning into a vendetta and he's got so few choices."

"Do you know him?"

"No. He must have graduated befoe I entered the Academy. He's probably served a few years before he got to Command College." The Vulcan's name had stirred no flicker of memory in Kirk.

Apprehensively, Kirk waited for Barnes to pounce on the Vulcan to keep him at the bowl, but someone had claimed the microphone and the commodore's attention. The Vulcan escaped further torture for the

moment.

"Lieutenant Commander Thackeray, Foreign Affairs Liaison," the man said in a smooth British accent; Kirk recognized the suave protocol officer. "Sir, I would like to beg the chair's indulgence and request the President to issue a blanket permission for the ladies who are guests to leave the room at their own discression, should they so desire."

"Bless him!" Ruth whispered fervently, making Kirk smile.

"Why didn't you tell me you were uncomfortable?"

"If I don't want to ask permission for myself, I certainly don't want you asking permission for me."

Commodore Barnes saw another opportunity to milk for all its worth. "Lieutenant Commander, are
you a self-proclaimed advocate of women's rights, or are you a throwback to the days of inequality?"

"Neither, Mr. President. I am an officer and a gentleman."

"Touche, Mr. Thackeray," Barnes laughed. "That is a time-honored response I respect. By all means, all civilian ladies are free to leave without asking permission."

Kirk made a bet with himself and started counting. Sure enough, a female voice issued from the speakers before he reached ten.

"Doctor McConnell, Surgeon General's staff. On a point of order. Will the President define for us the difference of civilian versus military bladders?"

The commodore was stumped. "Mr. Vice, is there such a difference?"

This time the beleagured Vice couldn't come through either. "Uh ... not that I know of, sir."
"I see. Your point noted, Doctor. Permission is now issued for all ladies in the hall."

The doctor wasn't through. "Sir, a correlative point, if I may? Will the President now be good enough to define the difference between male and female bladders? Or are we expected to assume the President is implying women are weaker than men, with less control over their bodily functions?"

Kirk felt his second urge to cheer. He didn't care if male and female bladders were as different as a red giant and a blue dwarf; if Barnes touched that one, he was a fool.

The commodore frowned; he was badly caught this time. That hadn't done his popularity much good. The crowd was roaring with laughter and the major contributors were obviously the women. To shift attention and make someone else the butt of the joke was a useful ploy at times like this. There was always a patsy, someone different and not very endearing by virture of that difference.

"Doctor, I'm no physician. I don't know if there are in fact any differences."

"I am, sir, and I can tell you --"

"Now, now. As a doctor you must appreciate the necessity of a second opinion. This is a biological issue as well as a procedural one. Let's have the opinion of an impartial observer. Ensign Spock, where are you?"

Kirk cursed silently as the Vulcan once again became the center of attention. There was an unhealthy color to his skin and Kirk wondered if he was sick, then remembered a tinge of green meant the Vulcan was flushed. It was probably the continued humiliation as well as the effects of the unaccustomed alcohol.

"The sonofabitch..." Kirk mumbled. Ruth, realizing his outrage, gave his hand a supportive squeeze.
"Aha, Mr. Scientist. Give us your opinion on the subject in question."

The Vulcan squared his shoulders. "Sir, I am neither a physician nor biologically Human. I do not know the answer to the question. But I do sympathize with the doctor's sentiments and find her point a relevant one under the circumstances."

"Anything for equality, then, with or without accurate data?"

"I would not presume to make such a generalized statement. But the concept of equality certainly deserves all the consideration we can give it without, if possible, making a joke of it."

Kirk realized the hilarity level had been plunging like a meteoroid caught in a gravity well. Not surprising, considering half the room's population was female. Some men were glancing at their partners, suddenly finding it inadvisable to laugh.

Barnes noticed it too. There was also a decided chill emanating from his right, where his wife was sitting, but he was too stubborn to give up without trying for the last word. "I agree, Ensign. If you'll prove your willingness to support equality to the best of your ability by making another trip to the Grog Bowl, I will declare all the bladders in this room equal and ready to be indulged at the owner's discretion."

"The reasoning behind your imposed condition escapes me, sir, and I do believe my abilities could be better utilized. However, as long as there is a cause acceptable to me I will, for a change, be pleased to conform to your requirement."

Kirk was on his feet and at the microphone before he was aware of having moved. His abrupt approach

startled the Vulcan, who took a step back. "Cadet Kirk, Academy graduate. Mr. President," he said, ignoring the proper procedures and bypassing the Vice. "As I am in total agreement with Mr. Spock's views on equality, and partaking of the Grog Bowl seems to be the proof of support, I'd like to ask permission to accompany the ensign."

Commodore Barnes realized he had totally lost control. All he could do now was to wave his permission toward the middle of the hall, which was now totally silent.

As soon as they had passed out of microphone pickup range, Kirk whispered, "Skim the top of the liquid; the vile stuff tends to settle to the bottom. Taking quick breaths through your mouth afterwards helps a bit, too."

They followed the steps carefully, and Kirk sensed that his advice made it slightly more bearable for Spock. After they replaced their cups he waited for his partner so they could march back in step but, unexpectedly, Kirk proceeded to fill two more cups, plunging the ladie deeply into the concoction this time. Spock seemed apprehensive, wondering what the Human was up to. It would not be a novel experience for him to have someone demonstrate goodwill, then turn right around to practice some more so-called humor at his expense. Kirk picked up both cups and faced the head table. Spock turned with him, at a loss about what else to do.

"Mr. President, much has been said tonight about what constitutes a good officer," Kirk said, raising his voice since he didn't have the benefit of a microphone. If he was going to make an enemy, he was going to make it as public as possible. "Some had to learn their lessons at this Brog Bowl. Those of us who are going to Command College also wonder what ultimately constitutes a good commander. Among many other things, we have been repeatedly told that the mark of a good commander is his willingness to go where he sends his men."

He raised one of the cups. "Mr. President, I'm drinking to the health of a good commander." He drained his cup, marched to the head table, placed the second cup in front of the commodore, came to attention and waited.

Barnes didn't have time to indulge himself by eyeing the disgusting liquid and other things swirling in the cup. It was just as well, as the smart-ass upstart had left him no choice and he had to ingest the repulsive thing. He stood up to lift the cup.

"Mr. Kirk, to the success of all future commanders in this hall." While the dangerously sparkling eyes promised: In your case, not if I can help it.

Try it, bastard, Kirk's eyes replied; just try it and show everyone you can dish it out but can't take it.

Barnes successfully drained the fiery liquid, managed not to grimace, and saluted the cadet in front of him. Applause broke out in the hall. Kirk returned the salute and marched back, Spock falling in step with him, then each separating to go to their respective tables.

"Oh, Jim, was it bad?" Ruth questioned with concern.

"It was horrible. And it was worth every doddamned, stinking, nauseating drop!"

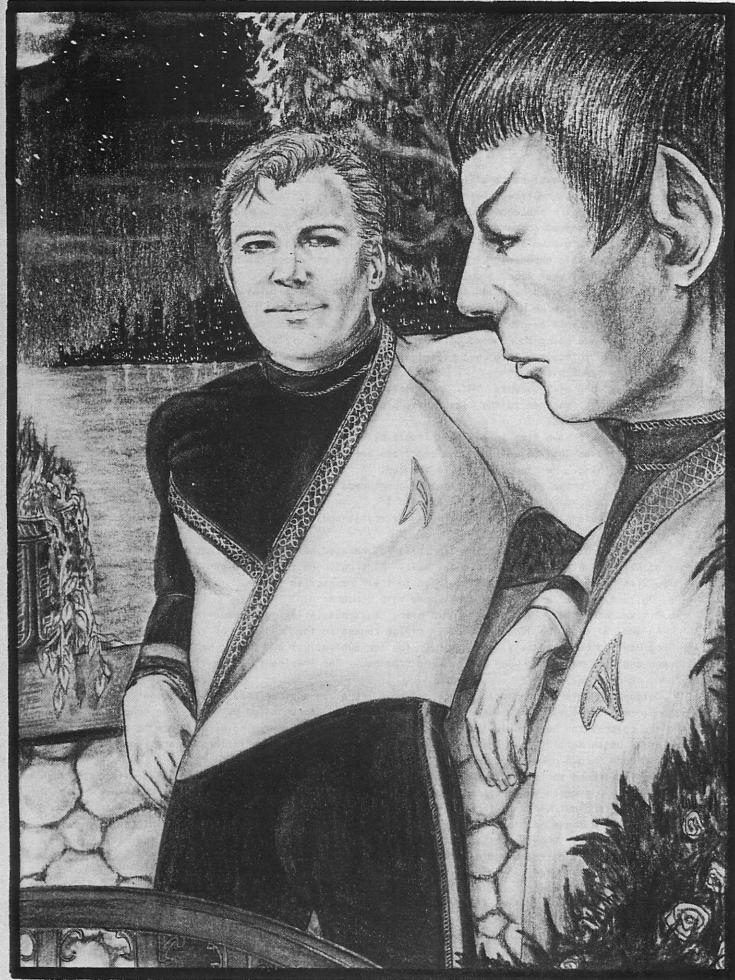
An admiral from the Judge Advocate's office requested the President of the Mess to kindly order the Grog Bowl to be taken away. It had been fun for awhile, but everything had a limit, and the limits of humor and good taste had been reached and breached. The President, not a little anxious himself by then, so ordered.

Coffee and after dinner drinks were served. There was another speech by the Deputy Commandant of the Command College. A few more toasts were proposed. Accompanied by music, the honor guards retired the colors, the head table filed out and everyone could relax, mingle, or dance to the band that immediately began setting up. The lights were dimmed and the glass partitions separating the room from the patio were thrown open.

Peering around various friends who approached to talk to him, Kirk tried to get a glimpse of the Vulcan. His own stomach was protesting and he had drunk only two cups of the stuff. The Vulcan had persevered so far, but Kirk had looked over at him a few times and had seen he could no longer touch or even look at a morsel of food or drop of liquid. The ensign seemed to be holding himself together by sheer will power. When the alien tried to get up after his body had time to brew that stuff awhile, he might find it out of the question. Kirk finally caught a glimpse of him going toward a hallway where the restrooms were located, and decided he was steady enough.

Some of Kirk's friends came over to pat him on the back and congratulate him for various things, not the least of which was victory over Commodore Barnes. Some solemnly told him that while it had been fun, he had been ill advised to make a powerful man his enemy. Some just slobbered over Ruth.

Kirk decided to dance while nausea could still be held at bay and pulled Ruth to the dance floor. His once proudly worn uniform was feeling too tight and too hot; he'd be glad to divest himself of it



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at first opportunity. Anticipating that occasion, he pulled Ruth closer, maneuvering her to the dark edges of the dance floor.

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He was about to lead her out to a deserted portion of the patio when he spied a now-familiar figure leaning against the railing, the tall, thin form outlined by the diffused moonlight. "Ruth, do you mind going to the table for awhile? I'll be right back." She followed his gaze and nodded. "Don't let my so-called friends get too chummy," he jokingly called after her.

The Vulcan, hearing someone approach, pulled himself straight, but then seeing who it was felt comfortable enough to reestablish his supportive hold on the rails.

"Are you all right?" Kirk asked, feeling a little self-conscious. He knew enough about the culture to know one did not usually ask such things of a Vulcan, thereby implying he might not be all right. But the ensign was now definitely pale and the dark circles under the eyes had nothing to do with night shadows.

Spock started to nod and stopped as if moving his head was painful. "Yes," he answered, sparing little breath. Kirk knew the rest of the air was being used to keep his stomach in place.

"I'm sorry," Kirk said.

The Vulcan studied him briefly, taking a deep breath. "You have done nothing to apologize for. In fact, I would like to express my gratitude for your support and concern."

Kirk blushed a little. "You're welcome. And that was a general apology. Also an inadequate one. That," he motioned in the direction of the banquet hall, "was inexcusable." The Vulcan was quiet. "It must be trying to be a Vulcan among Humans."

"No worse than being a Human among Vulcans."

"I suppose so." Kirk knew nothing about the man in front of him and although he detected a strange — almost pained — tone in the utterance, he took the statement at face value.

"And there are," the Vuican continued, his voice once again well modulated, "times when the compensations outweight the adversities."

Kirk wasn't sure if he had been complimented. "I'm glad. Say, do you need a ride ...." He couldn't very well say "home;" the alien was light years away from his real home. "... to your lodgings? I have an aircar."

"Unnecessary. I'm staying at the Starfleet complex."

"When you're ready to leave ... if you ...." How did one ask a Yulcan whether or not he needed the steadying arm of an escort? "Uh ... want company ...?"

The Vulcan came to his aid. Kirk wondered if that was actually the ghost of a smile on his lips or a trick of the dim lighting. "Do not be concerned. The air has helped. I feel much better now."

The conversation seemed to be at an end, but something kept Kirk in place. "The assignment lists will be up tomorrow. I hope you get what you want."

"! will not be assigned for another month. I'm entering the starship qualification tests next week."

Kirk's eyes lighted at the mention of a starship. The eliminations were rumored to be the equivalent of a meat grinder, but that's where his hopes and dreams rested. "Really? What class are you aiming for?"

"One of the heavy cruisers, if possible."

"You must have completed your deep space training." Kirk felt a surge of jealousy that this man had already spent considerable time in space, and not trapped in a solar system, either.

"I had a two-year tour of scout ship duty after the Academy before I was offered command training."

"That must have been a tough choice." It had been for him, too; he was itching to get into space, and it had been awfully hard to delay yet another two years for Command College. Leaving space must have been doubly hard.

"It is illogical to turn down further training in one's chosen field," the Vulcan stated.

"i heard the College was a challenge, to put it mildiy."

"It did require much work, concentration, and perseverance. But overall, I would say that it was ... a learning experience."

Was that a joke? Nah, Kirk decided, it couldn't be. Vulcans weren't supposed to have a sense of humor. "Rumor has it that Cygni 2 is totally dull for, er, recreational purposed." He cursed himself; what meant recreation to him would not be what the Vulcan would call it. "I suppose there wouldn't be time anyway."

"Very little. I did find some opportunities to read or play chess," Spock remarked. Knowing from experience the activities weren't particularly attractive to Humans, he added, "Recreational,

for me."

"Oh, you play chess," Kirk was plainly interested. "Too bad I'm leaving soon. I've never played with a —" He cut off abruptly, suddenly uncomfortable with generalizations which had come so easily before while refering to aliens. "I'd have liked to play you," he finished.

"it would have been a welcome change from the computer."

It took a moment for the implication to penetrate. The computer? Didn't anybody even bother to play a game of chess with him? "Oh, Lord! You must be one hell of a player. Well, the offer still stands next time we meet. I can't resist a challenge."

"Yes," Spock commented, his eyes on the young Human's face. "This is becoming obvious." He leaned a little more heavily into the support of hands on the railing and Kirk guiltily remembered he was detaining a pretty sick man with his chatter.

"I'd better get back to my date. Good luck, Mr. Spock, and ... give 'em hell."

"I don't precisely know what you mean by that, but I .. er ... wish you ... good luck ... too; and I'm sure you'll manage to, as you say, 'give 'em hell' yourself."

Kirk laughed. "Who knows? Maybe someday we'll have an assignment where we can give 'em hell together."

"That ... might be something to look forward to."

Kirk went back to the banquet hall, thinking it would indeed be nice to run into the Vulcan again someday. He wasn't what friends were made of, of course, but there was something ... interesting ... about him.

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# **Shipping Out**

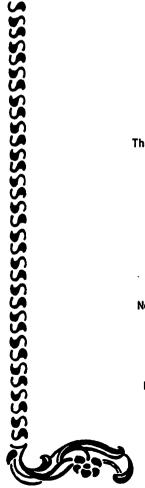
**By Emily Ross** 

There are endless worlds out there I've not yet seen;
Things I've not done, and people I've not met.
I want to pluck up something to remember green,
And something to forget.

At least I know what happiness is not:
To plant one's roots too firmly in a place;
To trust a spot

For constancy; or, sadder still, a face.
For roots one needs a surer ground than sod;
No face remains unchanged — not even that of God.

Lest I become -- too soon, too young -- content.





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# Choices

#### by Isabel Klein

"There is no glory in Starfleet, only hard work and plenty of that!" The voice was hard, the tone emphatic, the words accompanied by a fist making abrupt contact with a flat surface. Cutlery jumped and coffee sloshed out of cups as Jim, oblivious to everything save the young man across from him, leaned closer. "If you haven't learned that by now, I think you had better rethink your priorities, mister."

Conversation at nearby tables ceased as heads turned, with an occasional knowing grin as the speaker was recognized. Someone muttered, "Look who's talking," but not loud enough to reach the table where an ill-assorted foursome in Starfleet Academy tunics were just finishing dinner.

"Come on, Jim, he's entitled to his opinion," soothed the oldest member of the group. "You remember what it was like -- you're not quite over the hill yet."

"I don't remember feeling like that."

"You were one of the idealistic ones." Quan considered the man sitting next to her. "And, after all these years, you still are!"

"And you're not I suppose," Jim shot back. "I seem to remember--"

"Uh uh, you know the rules," Quan interrupted. "No last names, no rank, no past — for the duration of this course, only the present counts."

Mort, sitting opposite Quan, had remained silent during the argument. Now he cast an almost envious glance at Varn, whose statement that he wanted to "drape a little glory" around his shoulders had angered Jim. At least Varn knew what he wanted, which was more than Mort could say for himself. But then, Varn had been around a few years, time enough to decide which path to take, while Mort was on his first post-Academy assignment, and that a temporary tour of duty at a computer terminal. Attending this fourweek seminar on the latest technology wasn't likely to help clarify his goals.

Mort occasionally wondered just who was seated around the table. Varn, he knew, was only slightly older than himself, but completing one deep space mission qualified him as a veteran.

The other two? Mort didn't know. Quan, an older woman with silvery hair softly curling about her face, spoke quietly but incisively with just a touch of command in her voice. She was, he guessed, probably an upper echelon staff officer at Starfleet Command or perhaps even the Academy.

Jim, however, was an enigma. Not really old enough to command, but with that particular aura which marked him as a leader, he fit none of Mort's preconceived ideas to what experienced officers were like. Jim frankly admitted that he didn't know as much about computers as Mort and eagerly accepted Mort's tutoring, but he seemed easy going and rather happy-go-lucky. In Mort's experience, older officers were apt at best to ignore you, at worst to acknowledge your presence only long enough to assign some onerous job. They almost never seemed very likable, but Mort found he did like Jim.

Perhaps that was one purpose of these courses, which placed everyone on the same level and provided an opportunity for younger members of the fleet to mix on almost equal basis with more senior officers, at least until the completion of the course when each would return to their assigned duty stations — be it desk, terminal, or starship.

Untill now, neither of the older officers had said much when Varn was giving vent to his theories on everything from the origin of the universe to the best bar within walking distance of the Academy grounds. This time was different; this time he had touched a raw nerve in Jim.

"You'll have to admit," Quan offered, "that the element of glory does exist. Certain ships, certain people, seem to attract a certain amount of ...shall we say, notoriety?"

Jim looked sharply at the older woman, but met only bland innocence. "Okay," he replied. "But if certain ships get more publicity than others, then it's usually because they get the kind of assignments where if they're successful, they get commendations; if they fail, reprimands or worse. The real question is: Why do these ships get the difficult assignments?"

Jim looked around the table inviting the others to comment, but no one did. Mort certainly didn't know what Jim was angling for, though he suspected that Quan knew but wasn't about to volunteer.

In the end, Jim answered his own question. "Those ships — the ones that get the tough assignments — have proven themselves over the long haul. They are the best, and they are the best because their crews work the hardest at perfecting their skills and raising their efficiency levels. That's why you hear about the ships they serve on — not because they are motivated by a need for glory, but because they do their jobs and do them better than anyone else. And also because such ships attract

the best people: like seeking like.

Varn looked at Jim with a mixture of surprise and amusement. "You really believe that, don't you? Buy the Academy line."

"I guess from your position the answer is 'yes'. But, I believe it because I know that it works. I've seen it work time and time again."

Jim leaned slightly across the table. "And if you aren't ready for a great deal of hard work, then I suggest you resign. We don't want you. We don't want anyone we can't count on at all times to do his job, and the glory seeker is thinking of only himself and what's in it for him, rather than doing the best job he can for his ship and his shipmates. If you're not prepared to do that, then we don't need you. And more importantly, we don't want you with us. It's that simple."

Mort had no inkling that Jim felt so strongly on the subject. Although they were sharing a room, most of their time was spent talking about the course. Mort's impression of Jim had been that of an easy-going line officer, content to do the expected and perhaps a little more.

"I should have known." Mort told himself. Nobody's that relaxed, and nobody is as determined as Jim is to master the intricacies of computers could ever be described as 'doing only what's expected'." He ruefully admitted he had a lot to learn about sizing up people.

Varn wasn't about to retreat, and pressed the argument forward.

"You've just made my point for me. There are 'glory ships', and I'm going to get on one of them. The Enterprise — that's the ship I'm heading for. Once I'm on the Big E, I'll make a name for myself. Kill a few Klingons, a few Romulans, capture a few pirates, save a few planets from disaster. Then there'll be no stopping me!" This last came with a grandiose sweeping of the arms in keeping with the quality of the words.

Quan handed a glass of water to Jim, who was having difficulty with a tomato slice. "Hard to swallow?" she asked innocently, receiving a look of pure venom for her trouble.

Jim turned back to Varn. "Taking a life, any life, is repugnant. Talking about it so casually tells me that you have no real conception of the meaning of the words you glibly utter. All life is precious — Klingon, Romulan, Human, Vulcan, Orion — the list is as long as the number of sentient species in the galaxy. Every time you take a life, you give up a small fraction of your own — for want of a better phrase — your humanity. How did you ever slip through the screen at the Academy?"

Jim subjected Varn to a hard stare. "Have you ever been responsible for a death — even indirectly?"

Varn shook his head.

"Until then, I suggest you keep your mouth closed on the subject. When you've ... 'killed a few Klingons' ... we can discuss this again. You may have a different point of view."

Varn didn't pursue this line of argument further, to Mort's relief. Death was not an appetizing topic. But, though Varn retreated slightly, he wasn't about to abandon the field of verbal conflict.

"Okay. Point to you. But that doesn't mean I buy your other arguments. I'm still going to get on the Enterprise and make a name for myself," Varn said with a self-satisfied smile.

"And just what makes you think the Enterprise will have you?" Jim asked. "Commander Spock doesn't seem overly impressed with your work in class."

"And I'm not overly impressed with him as a teacher. He just covers what's in the manuals."

Mort strongly disagreed. "The material isn't the easiest, but Spock presents it clearly and concisely, and its our job to absorb it. I wouldn't want to fall behind, though. It's exhausting enough as it is. But," he added reflectively, "he isn't like other instructors I've had -- none of the frills, no laughs or jokes, and he doesn't explain. I think he wants us to figure it out for ourselves."

"How can anyone know what that pointy-eared freak thinks?" Varn asked.

Quan and Mort both reached for Jim as he came out of his chair. "That, mister, is the best first officer in the fleet," he exploded. "And the best computer mind. And no egotistical, untried junior officer is ever going to rise to his level." He leaned over the table until his face was almost touching Varn's, his voice very low, very controlled. "I've told you before, we don't want you in the Fleet. And I suggest that the best thing you can do for yourself and Starfleet is to resign — today."

Mort, who would have been quaking in his boots if an undoubtedly senior officer spoke to him in that tone, agreed with Jim's statement. Varn, however, continued along much the same line as before.

"That's the second time you've told me to resign. Starfleet needs computer experts like me. I have no intention of resigning. I'm going to have it all.

"Are you deaf as well as stupid?" Jim asked. "You have no conception of the first thing about working with people. A ship is a unit, working together. When I'm not on duty, I rely on the person who relieved me to do the job I was doing. And that's true up and down the line from the captain to

the newest ensign on board. We all rely on each other. Would you want to rely on you to do your job?"
He let that sink in before continuing. "Think on that, Varn. Think long and hard."

Jim turned away in disgust, focusing instead on Mort. "What about you?" he challenged. "You've been quiet through most of this. Why did you join?"

"it's a dumb reason," Mort replied. "I'm not even sure I belong."

"It can't have been too dumb or you never would have gotten in. Try me."

"I was sort of chasing rainbows. I wanted to know what was on the other side of the sun, beyond the next star, over the rainbow. Starfleet seemed the best way to find out."

Varn laughed out loud. Quan muttered, "Good healthy curiosity." Jim looked interested. "And have you found out what's beyond the next star?" he asked.

"Not yet," Mort admitted. "Sometimes I don't think I ever will, and I'm not even sure that I can. The next star might lead to the one after that and then the one after that."

"And, if you never find out -- will that make a difference?"

Mort was silent for a long minute before replying.

"No," he answered slowly. "I guess it doesn't. It's the searching that's important -- the quest, not the answer. Research rarely provides the answer we expect, but that doesn't keep scientists from looking."

Jim smiled. "That's the beauty of it. There's always another star and another planet and another phenomenon to investigate. You never have all the answers, nor even most of them. If you seek the unknown, there are no guarantees you'll get an answer. But as long as you seek, then it's all worthwhile. Your life, your career has meaning."

"Ugh," Varn jumped in. "You can't believe that drivel they hand out to cadets like so much pablum! 'Life has meaning if you do this. Career has meaning if you do that'." Varn actually sneered. "No idealistic claptrap is going to get me. Go for the tangible benefits; that's meaning enough."

"And you thingk 'glory' is tangible?" Jim asked in disbelief.

"Not the glory, but what it gets you: promotions, rank, and the perquisites that go with it.

The pick of assignments, job offers in civilian life. The galaxy can be mine, and I mean to have it all."

"Thank goodness," Jim said ferverently, "the vast majority of the Fleet doesn't share your views. We'd never have survived as an organization if such sentiments prevailed, at least not as we are today. Instead, we probably would have ended up like the Klings or the Romulans."

"Not the Romulans, Jim," Quan stated. "Personal gain does not appear to be their primary motive; i even have a drudging respect for them." She turned toward Varn, her eyes travelling over the young man as if seeing him for the first time and not liking what she found. "As for you! In a lifetime in Starfleet, I have never heard such cynical avarice and cold-bloodedness expressed by anyone in uniform. And I hope I never hear such sentiments again. Jim is right -- I, too, suggest you resign. And sooner rather than later, before you have a chance to endanger one of our ships with your warped view of your own importance."

Quan rose from her chair, looking towards Jim. "Coming?" she asked.

Jim nodded and rose, looking at Mort. "Coming?"

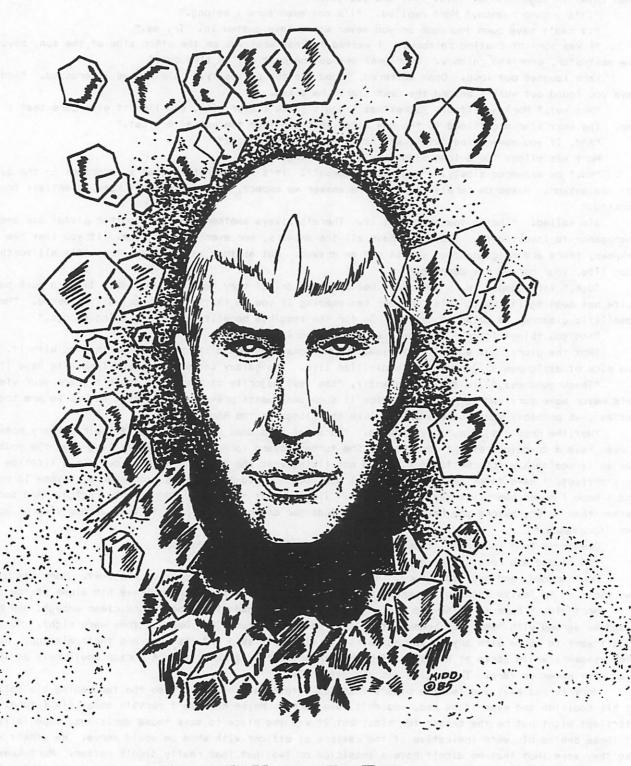
Mort nodded, and he, too, stood. He looked at Varn, who was already on his feet. Mort was of two minds -- to invite Varn to accompany them as he had been invited, or to leave him alone at the table.

Mort didn't have to think too long. Jim and Quan had made their positions clear enough, and Mort found he agreed with them, not because they were senior officers, but because they were right. Mort didn't want to serve with anyone who put himself before his ship and its crew and their mission. No glory-seekers would serve at his side if he had anything to say about it. A person could rely on Jim and Quan, but never on Varn. The choice was not difficult.

Mort turned away and led the others from the cafeteria. he didn't see the two behind him smiling at his decision and even if he had, wouldn't have cared. Maybe he wasn't certain about his future. Starfleet might not be the answer for hims, but it was the place to make those decisions, especially if those behind him were indicative of the calibre of officer with whom he would serve. He didn't know who they were (Not that he didn't have a suspicion or two) but that really didn't matter. Mort knew his decision was correct for him, and no one else's opinion was important. He was content within himself. The next star was right around the corner waiting for him. It was an appointment he had every intention of keeping — just as soon as he got this blasted course over and done with!

The mess hall doors quietly closed behind them.





Though Years Be Past

by Kim Knapp

Ensign Sonia Martinson tried her communicator again. As before, there was no response. She snapped it down sharply, then from habit tried to look around. But the sun reflect so brightly off the white sand dunes that even with maximum filters on her goggles, she was unable to see anything but a blinding glare.

She checked her tricorder, then turned toward the direction from which she'd last been contacted. She was one of the four members of a minor landing party assigned to take biological and geological specimens. It was routine. Nothing ever went wrong. But this time, something had. Within an hour of transporting to the planet's surface, communications had been lost. A few minutes later a severe sand storm surrounded them, effectively separating the landing party. And before they could regroup, surface communications were lost as well.

Sonia had tried to return to the exact point of beamdown. She held her communicator inside her jacket, trying the signal repeatedly. But she could see that some grains of the blowing sand had jammed it beyond her ability to repair.

Don't lose your head, she told herself. You passed the survival course, too. First priority, shelter. She closed her eyes for a moment, remembering her first look around the area. To the left were some tall glasslike pillars and an outcropping of rock. In every other direction they had seen nothing but sand dunes. At least, she decided, the rocks would provide some protection against the wind.

She re-oriented herself, then set out in the direction of those rocks. She couldn't remember exactly how wide the formation was — in the blinding sand it was possible that she could pass it by completely. With her head down against the force of the wind, she walked directly into one of the pillars, striking her forehead sharply. For a moment the white whirling of the sand was gone as she literally saw stars. Sonia clung to the pillar for a moment to keep from falling, then looked up when her vision cleared.

To her astonishment, she saw the tall figure of a humanoid male, clearly visible through the previously opaque surface of the structure. His skin was like alabaster, his smoothe face possessed of a unique serenity. His eyes, slowly moving to examine her, were like deep blue sapphires. Sonia was transfixed, unable to move, until the crystal pillar shattered. The part of her mind that was a trained observer of scientific phenomena noted that in spite of the fierce winds, the shards of crystal fell straight down to lie at her feet. She began to move away, motivated by something that she could not name. But he moved forward easily and caught her wrist, holding her without apparent effort. Once again he slowly appraised her, his eyes demanding. Sonia shivered, although she was not cold. She felt a soft, hurried breeze brushing through her mind as if she were a book left open, pages fanning rapidly, information available to any who could see it.

"At last, my waiting is done," he said. His voice reverberated with the resonance she had once heard from a crystal bell.



"All but one of the landing party have beamed up." Lieutenant Uhura informed the captain of the Enterprise. "Ensign Martinson has not responded, and I cannot get a signal through to her communicator."

"Sensors?" Kirk asked, swinging his chair to face the science station.

"There are no life readings in the area," Spock replied, not looking up from his console.

"Widen the search area," Kirk ordered. "People don't just disappear without a trace on a dead planet."



Sonia sat on the cave floor, her chin resting on her knees. The tall male had given his name as Anar, but did not speak again as he propelled her firmly toward the long, narrow entrance tunnel in the rocks. He had pulled her inside, then set about examining the walls in the dim light from the entrance, seemingly forgetting her existence. Finally he placed his hands next to the walls and moved them in a peculiar pattern. The dark rock shimmered and began to glow, emitting considerable light. Once she had begun to move toward the cave's entrance, but Anar had turned to look at her, his eyes forbidding, and Sonia felt a sudden grip of momentary paralysis that eased a second later. That was merely a warning, and she knew that he could hold her thus as long as he wanted.

After he had brought up the light he sat down facing her, his eyes examining her again. Nervously, Sonia broke the silence.

"I'm Ensign Martinson, from the USS Enterprise," she said hesitantly.

Finally he answered. "I know who you are, and why your ship is here. The knowledge does not interest me, as it is not pertinent."

Sonia gulped, then realized that he had finished. She spoke of the ship's assignment, the scientific interest, and finally, in desperation, of their weaponry.

At that, Anar smiled grimly. "They cannot destroy what they cannot find," he said evenly Subdued momentarily, she watched him. A cloth was draped about his lean waist, reminiscent of the ancient Egyptians, but he wore no jewelry, no badge of authority. The stinging sand had not seemed to affect him, not had it gotten into his eyes, though he made no effort to shield them. If the circumstances were at all different, she told him silently, I could have been very attracted to you."

"Anar," he said in his melodic voice, "means 'the last.' And I am the last of my race. We ever strove to improve ourselves, but we went too far, beyond our ability to correct. And so we began to fail as a species, victims of our own genetic manipulations. In my generation, I alone am an example of the perfection for which we had striven. Thus I have waited for another, one free of the defects of the genetics, to begin anew the race that destroyed itself. You shall be the mother of the Nah-Seer, the new generation of our people."

Sonia stared at him in disbelief. "You want me -- oh, no! !'m not having children for quite a while -- if I ever do. I refuse to be ... used by you -- or anyone."

Anar was unmoved. "My need, the need of the Nah-Seer is greater than your sense of outrage. Without you, we cannot become, cannot reach the destiny planned for us."

Sonia shook her head indignantly. "No. I won't give up my career — the place I have chosen for myself — to be used as breeding stock by you."

He looked at her impassively. "The choice is not yours to make." He stood up, unfastening the cloth about his waist. Sonia's eyes dropped as the cloth fell to the ground and she felt a fleeting sense of relief — to all external appearances, Anar was human. She jumped to her feet, intending to make a hasty exit, but Anar moved to the entrance ahead of her, barring escape. She had the impression that, like the pillar in which he had been imprisoned, he would not be moved until he was ready. For a long moment she stared at him, but saw only unyielding purpose in his eyes. She looked about wildly, but there was no escape. She backed slowly until she reached the far cavern wall. Anar walked purposefully to where she stood, stopping only inches away. He stared into her eyes for an eternity, then raised his hand toward her face. His eyes darkened briefly when she flinched but he continued, touching his thumb gently to the center of her forehead, and then her right temple.

Sonia tried to strike out but discovered to her horror that her body refused to obey her commands. Even the release of crying out, of weeping, was denied her as Anar eased her down to the cold stone floor. His eyes were cool as stared down at her, and she tried to squeeze her own eyes shut, attempting to block out the sensation of his firm body against hers, his unwanted intrusion into her flesh. But even her eyelids would not respond, and for a time she was compelled to watch that coolly impassive face, eyes unreadable, flinty hard. Sonia wondered what he would be thinking; was she a tool, merely to be used, or could he perceive her as an individual, complete with personality and violated rights? Clinically she noted that the Enterprise had a priority call in six days, and she guessed that a maximum of four days would be spent in the search for her.

As Anar stood and refastened his waist cloth, Sonia wondered if he would be careless enough to let her escape.



"Captain Kirk, we fully sympathize with your predicament, but the Territorial Conference on Beta Seven is top priority. You are ordered to change course and depart within seventy hours. Starfleet Command out."



Sonia brushed off her tunic and slacks before dressing, then headed for the narrow tunnel entrance. She was stopped as Anar returned at that moment, and she dropped her eyes under his stare. He was carrying an armical of what looked like tapestries, and some assorted containers that appeared to have been chipped from stone. He fastened one of the tapestries over the cave entrance, and layered the others in an even pile. Then, opening one of the containers, he handed it to Sonia and ordered her to drink. It held a thick, sap-like liquid that tasted equally vile to the woman.

"Drink it all," he told her when she hesitated after the first taste. "It will supply the requirements of your body for this climate." Slowly, grimacing, she finished it, as was relieved to find that the cloying taste did not linger in her mouth.

"How long do I have to stay here?" she asked.

Anar frowned. "Until the new generation is born, of course. How long is gestation in your species?" Sonia glared at him. "280 days," she replied. "But I won't get pregnant. I have a contraceptive implant good for another--"

"That has been neutralized," Anar informed her. "You have probably conceived by now."

Sonia shuddered in spite of herself. "How can you make me have a baby in a cave?" she whispered. "Do you hate me so much?"

"You will bear the Nah-Seer here in complete safety," Anar told her. "After your responsibility has ended, you will be returned to your ship."

"They'll be gone in four days," she protested bitterly. Anar did not reply.

The day ended slowly, Sonia fidgeting under Anar's gaze. When darkness fell, he dimmed the interior lights and moved to the pile of tapestries, climbing under the top one. His eyes gleamed in the dark, but Sonia did not move.

"You must rest. The Nah-Seer depends on your body for its well-being. If you abuse yourself, I will take the choice from you as I did before."

Remembering the horrible sensation of being helpless in her own body, Sonia relented. She found the make-shift bed surprisingly comfortable, although Anar's presence beside her caused sleep to come slowly.

She woke as Anar left the cave, but he returned almost immediately, and Sonia frowned as she saw that he was carrying more of the stone-like containers. After they had eaten he stood again. "You will need things to do, to occupy the time. I will bring something for you." As soon as he left, Sonia went outside the cave. To her relief, the winds had ceased, and she saw only sand and sun. Taking her bearings, she moved toward where the landing party had first beamed down.

She looked back once to see if Anar was following, but he was not in sight. She crossed a few sand dunes, then stopped, not really sure how close she was to the site. She realized that any footprints would have long since blown away, and since she did not see any sign of a search party, she decided to try one more dune.

At the top she froze, seeing Anar standing motionless in the center of the next small valley. As soon as she ducked down he turned toward her, and began to move in her direction. Sonia looked around, hoping against all hope that she would see a security team materializing, but by the time Anar reached her, they had not come.

He took her wrist, pulling her along beside him, and walked on. "Exercise is conducive to your health," he said matter-of-factly. "But you must not overexert yourself. Tomorrow, we will walk again, if there are no storms."

Inside the cave, she saw a pile of materials and tangled masses of threads and yarns. "The Nah-Seer will need clothing, as will you when the pregnancy progresses."

It took her an entire day to untangle and sort the threads, some of which were obviously for decorative stitching. She knew that she was no seamstress, but since there was no alternative unless she was able to escape by tomorrow, she began to work as if she had accepted the situation. She began to make patterns for a large, loose gown for herself, since that need would come before the child, and found that the day actually flew by with work to do. She was surprised when at sunset Anar indicated that she should come with him for a walk, now that the heat of the day was fading.

When she woke the next morning it was with the realization that this was the day that searchers from the Enterprise must arrive, or she would be stranded here for the rest of her life, however long that might be. It was as if Anar had read her thoughts, for he did not leave the cave all day, not even for more of the containers. He had brought extras the night before, keeping them just inside the entrance. He sat silently with her all day, watching her constantly. Under his gaze Sonia did not even try to work, but sat unconsciously wringing her fingers and listening with all her might. Finally at the end of the week-long day, the shadows lengthened until they covered everything, and Sonia drooped in resignation, trying to control her tears.

"They will not come for you," Anar said.

"Thanks so much," she replied bitterly. She felt a need to keep herself barricaded from him, and she did not want to get caught in the trap of accepting him.

In the bed that night she turned her back to him, as she always did, and wondered how she would survive if anything happened to him. She did not know where he went on his trips, not where he kept the foodstuffs that he brought back. It was obvious that he had a cache of supplies somewhere, but he never invited her along when he left, nor did he enlighten her further as to himself or his people.



Two weeks passed, and Sonia had not finished the garment she had started. Rebeliously she had put it aside, forcing the hours past by staring at the cave wall. Anar compelled her, mornings and evenings, to walk with him, but that was all. Except to answer the occasional urges of nature, she had settled into a dull apathy. This could not be real.

This day, she was joited out of her stupor by a random thought, and she had questioned Anar repeatedly to verify the number of days she had been held here. When she finally began to believe him she trembled, wanted to scream in rage. He had won.

Sonia's cycle had been clock-regular for years, and she was now two days late. No other planetfall had ever disrupted her schedule — she was forced to accept the fact that she was pregnant.

With the realization, the vagueness of her thinking process ceased, and she found her mind turning in the only direction left — to the pregnancy and birth. Under Anar's satisfied eyes, she rejuctantly picked up her sewing, muttering expletives learned on a dozen planets over the tangled threads.



Weeks later, Sonia had settled into a loose routine of sorts. In the morning before the sands heated up she would go for a short walk, eat, and then sew for most of the day. As the sun fell she would check her progress on whatever garment she was working, then Anar would accompany her for a longer walk, always in the same direction. When once she wanted to move in another, his look clearly indicated that it would be at her peril. Again eating, she would question him, but rarely received answers, unless it was about the desert itself. The land was mostly lifeless, with few plants and still fewer animals which preyed upon each other. After a short and usually difficult conversation she would give up and turn to designing patterns for decorating the garments on which she sewed, or consider the next pattern.

Anar seemed to have a large supply of material, for whenever she neared the end of her supplies he would bring more. She made several things for herself out of the white, muslin-like fabric, and began to consider clothing for the child. Anar then brought her some pictures on material of what the cloth that he wore looked like unfolded, and instructed her to make such things for the Nah-Seer. She chose several in various sizes, and actually began to spend much time doing decorative stitchery on the cloths.

it did not seem long before she had to wear the things she had made for herself, as her uniform tunic began to feel too snug. From that point on, she felt like some sort of balloon, constantly expanding. She used her uniform as a pattern and made a few sets of slacks and tunics for after the birth, but did not spend much time decorating them. She felt like a prisoner, having no right to adornment.

By the time her reckoning indicated that she was about six months along in the pregnancy, Anar began to spend large parts of the day away from the cave. Sonia felt that perhaps he did not care to be around her, but when she belligerantly mentioned it one evening, her merely looked puzzled. "I am cultivating a field to provide for the needs of the Nah-Seer. You cannot feed them for all of their lives, and our supplies must be replenished as well." But he refused to take her to the field, or anywhere but the same area where she continued to take daily walks.



All too soon, time came for the birth. Sonia had become used to being big and ungainly and not sleeping well at night. But when she woke up with a mild cramp, she wondered, for this was new. Another one woke her up again, and from then on she only dozed fitfully between the increasingly painful movements. Finally dawn arrived, and Anar found her curled up, clenching her teeth against the pain.

"You should have woken me," he said sternly. He examined her carefully and smiled, the first time Sonia had seen that expression. "The birth will be this day," he said, sounding very satisfied. When the next pain grabbed at her, Anar watched carefully until it was over. "This I will take from you," he said, and before Sonia could protest, he touched her forehead and temple, just as he had nine months previously. To her surprise, not only could she not move, but she felt no pain even though she knew the contractions were contorting her body. She had become accustomed to Anar's impersonal examinations on a regular basis, so when he moved her into the position he had chosen for the birth, she did not protest. She only watched the roof of the cave and wondered how long the birth would last.

As with many first deliveries, it was not quick. Finally, after hearing Anar chanting in an unfamiliar language, Sonia saw him lay a child across her belly, the cord still pulsing with her life's blood. Again he chanted, then placed another infant beside the first before attending to Sonia.

When he released her from the paralyzing hold she was not in any great pain, the wounds of the children's passage having been sewn and bandaged. But he appeared surprised when Sonia demanded to hold the babies, one at a time. "They are of my body as much as yours," she informed him hotly. "I have a right." He conceded, and she stared in wonder at the light-haired girl and the boy with dark eyes that matched his skin and hair. They cried, and she set the boy to her breast, jumping slightly when the child latched on painfully. After a short time, Anar took the babies away from her, and laid them each on a tapestry, folded up around the edges to keep out the omnipresent sand.

And just before they slept, Anar astonished Sonia beyond belief as he knelt on the sand before her, taking her hand, and kissed the palm tenderly. "You have made possible the Nah-Seer," he said. "So long as we write records, so long as we record our histories, you will not be forgotten."



Sonia hated the way her belly felt, the loose skin not responding at all when she tried to tighten her muscles. So she began a regiment of exercise, as well as the daily walking, of which Anar approved. By the time the babies were a month old, she could fit into the clothes she had made for after the birth. Her uniform had long since rotted away, even though she had cut it up and used it only for patterns for new clothing. She nursed the children regularly, taking over their care from Anar. After that, he began to spend regular hours away from the cave, at which Sonia was slightly relieved, for he paid the children so much attention that she feared they would be spoiled before they could walk.

When the children were crawling, Anar returned one day without the stone containers of sap. He was carrying a bag that he revealed to be full of grain, and a device for heating and cooking. He boiled the cereal himself and although the taste was somewhat bland, Sonia enjoyed it merely because it was different from what she'd been eating for more than a year.

She noticed that Anar had relaxed somewhat around her, and occasionally he did things for her that he had not in the past. Once he brought in a brightly colored ribbon for her hair, since she always had trouble keeping the growing mass out of her face and string just didn't do the job. Sonia could only stare, and did not thank him until later.

Their diet began to change as Anar brought in more varieties of grand and brightly colored vegetables. Sonia began to experiment, testing her meager cooking skills on him. Most things he approved, but one dish that she tried made him quite ill. Sonia did not cook it again, but it gave her a certain amount of satisfaction to know that he was not impervious to everything.



On one typically sunny desert day, Sonia put her needle down and began to work on a knotted mass of thread that had haited her work. With a start she realized that recently she thought less and less about her former life and the things she might have been doing. As time had passed, her attention had turned more to the immediate concerns of her survival and that of the children. They seemed to be developing faster than human children, and Anar had gradually put them on an adult diet when they were only about six months old. They had sprouted teeth quickly after that, and began to take their first hesitant steps, always inquisitive about their surroundings. Anar had not yet given them names, and Sonia finally asked the reason.

"They will choose their names from the Archives of my people," he had informed her. "Until then, they know to whom I am speaking." And they did. If Anar spoke to Sonia, they did not respond, but if they were spoken to, they chatted back in the language that Sonia was unable to translate, their proficiency growing every day. When speaking to Sonia, they used only Standard, and she was greatly impressed by their ability.

They were constantly getting into the few possessions in the cave, and it became an eternal task for Sonia to keep them under control. They rarely responded to her words, and even a spanked hand earned little more than a level stare and a temporary cessation of the forbidden activity. She realized wryly that the only real response she got from them was when she provided a meal.

Anar's shadow darkened the tunnel entrance momentarily, and Sonia looked up just in time to see both children drop masses of thread and vegetables and rush to greet their father. I'm not really necessary, she realized. They don't have any feeling for me — Anar is their world.

The tall man dropped to a knee to greet the children, his pale body still seeming to dazzle from the sun. Unlike Sonia, his skin did not react to the ultraviolet rays with a color change, and there was no visible line of change where exposed skin met protected skin.

Sonia watched, slightly envious, as Anar hugged the babies, then spoke to them in the language he had refused to teach her. His voice was stern, and she guessed that his sharp eyes had noticed the tangle of food and fabric.



Later, on a day when Sonia had sent the children outside with Anar and was working on a new waistcloth for the boy, Anar entered the cave unexpectedly early, carrying her communicator and tricorder. Before Sonia coud ask, he explained, "The children have grown enough for me to handle their care entirely. And they must begin to learn about their people and the ways of their race. It is time for you to return to your ship." Sonia swallowed against a rising tide of panic.

"My ship is long gone from here," she reminded him. "If you send me out now, it is to my death. At least you can be that honest with me."

Anar regarded her gravely. "You do not trust me, and that is to be expected. But his time, you must. I have given my word that this will be done, and it will. Come."

Sonia stood up, wavering. She could not believe, and yet at times it seemed that he was capable of producing any miracle. "Perhaps," Anar told her, "you should wear the clothing that you have just finished. It is clean, and will present the best appearance." Wearily, resigned, she decided to play along. She changed into the slacks and tunic that she had made and set aside, after embroidering ornate designs along the seams and edges. She had never had any indication that such clothing would ever be needed, but she had started them out of boredom near the end of her pregnancy.

She followed Anar out of the cave and away from the rock formation. The children followed eagerly, but at a word from Anar they returned to their play close to the cave. Sonia and Anar walked in the direction of her original beamdown site, with Anar striding along purposefully. When he stopped, he handed the communicator and tricorder to Sonia. "Signal your ship," he instructed her.

"They're not here," she insisted, but he was adamant. Sonia flipped up the grid, noticing that the device had been cleaned of the obstructing sand. When a tone indicated that the signal was being received, she looked at Anar. His face was expressionless.

"Enterprise here, Lieutanant Kyle speaking," the communicator announced.

"This is Ensign Martinson," Sonia replied. She did not continue — she wasn't quite sure what to say. She looked again at Anar and saw no emotion — no regret at her leaving. He had been considerate of her needs, but only to suit his own purpose, and she was glad that he had not asked her to stay. She would not have to refuse him.

"Permission to come aboard," she said quietly.

"We are locked onto your coordinates," Kyle said. "Ready to beam up at your signal."
"I thank you, and my people thank you," Anar said. "Your name will not be forgotten."
Sonia only nodded. She could not thank him. "Ready to transport." she said.



The transporter room materialized around her, and Sonia stared in wonder. She had never thought to see this room again, and even while speaking into her communicator, she had not really believed that the Enterprise would be there.

Dr. McCoy and Captain Kirk were waiting for her, seeming slightly taken aback at her appearance.
"Where have you been for the last four days?" Kirk demanded, as McCoy escorted her off the platform.

"Wait, Jim" the doctor said. "Let me get this girl to Sickbay." Sonia halted stubbornly.

"I'm fine," she said. They were not convinced.

"I'll be the judge of that," McCoy told her, leading the reluctant ensign down the corridor to the turbolift.

After her physical, the doctor told her to get into uniform and report to Briefing Room Three. Sonia went to her quarters, confused and slowed by the length of time she'd spent away from the ship. Once in her room, she stopped in front of a mirror, staring in disbelief. The figure she saw there had long, sun-streaked hair, where hers had always been sort of a mousy brown. The image was slender to the point of thinness, where she had always fought with a few extra pounds. And where Sonia was pale, this woman was dark — her skin weathered and tanned. She understood now the captain's look of surprise when she had beamed aboard. She had to wait for the fabricator to provide her with a new uniform, the ones left behind in her quarters now too large.

While waiting, Sonia sat down on the bed, then nervously stood again. It was too soft. She held her arms tightly around her stomach. The sickbay, the ship's corridors, all seemed so artificial, so

closed in after the desert planet. And so noisy!

She settled into a chair, her mind racing. A year and a half had passed for her. She'd become accustomed to only three people, and was now surrounded by more than four hundred. And her work — would she ever fit in here again?

A tone from the delivery slot announced the arrival of her new uniform. As she pulled it on, the once-coveted material felt strangely irritating to her skin. She bit her lip, looked at the almost-familiar cabin. She would have to fit in. There was nowhere else to go.



in the briefing room, Sonia sat quietly while Spock brought the computer up to date. Then she told her story, clearly and concisely, watching only the computer console in front of her.

When she finished, she looked up and caught an expression of disbelief on the captain's face. "You don't believe me," she said accusingly.

Kirk met her gaze squarely. "It is hard to believe — only four days have passed here since you disappeared."

"Jim," McCoy broke in, "the physical examination bears her out. I've compared her medical records to today's exam. Since her last physical three months ago, she's gone through a normal pregnancy, returned to full health, and nursed the infant for a time. Her skin and muscle tone and weight change indicate a length stay in a dry climate, with plenty of exposure to the sun."

"It is apparent," Spock interjected dryly, "that the ensign has lived at a different time rate than we have experienced on the Enterise."

The group sat in silence for a moment, digesting the implications.

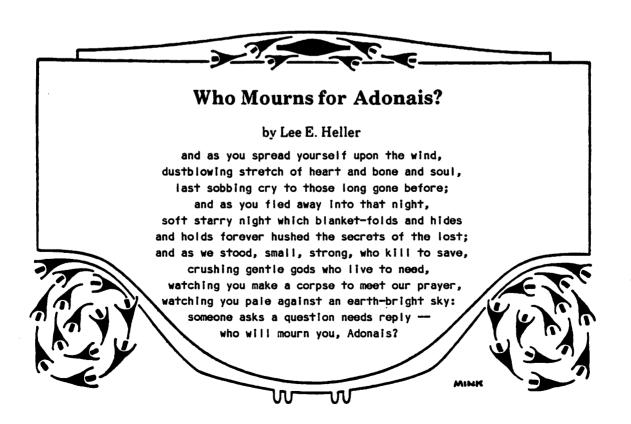
"Ensign, are you able to return to duty?" Captain Kirk asked.

"I think so, sir," Sonia replied. "I'll do some studying as well, to make sure -- unless you would prefer that I re-qualify."

"That won't be necessary. Dismissed." Kirk turned to the doctor after Sonia had left the room.

"Bones, I don't know where she's been. But it wasn't where — or when — we've been looking." He paused, then frowned. "I wonder what new race she has been mother to?"

"Or what old race reborn?" Spock said quietly.



# Innuendo

### by Kim Knapp

With the blue light from the sterilizer field reflecting eerily off his face, McCoy began the closing-up procedure for the patient. "Sealer," he said, his hand extended for the instrument that would slip smoothly into his palm and remain still until his grip was secure. But this one did not slide in, rather it was slapped stingingly against his extended hand. He jerked his eyes from the field of operation to meet the steely gaze of blue ones. Damn. Christine had never acted like this before. He pulled his attention back to the surgical area before him, efficiently closed the wound, then pulled off the microfine gloves and tossed them across the instrument tray.

But halfway there he was distracted by a peripherally seen motion, and watched as Nurse Chapel finished the clean-up and set the patient on the monitors. Damn, he thought again.

He'd seen Christine under fire, he'd seen her ill, he'd seen her with all of her carefully suppressed emotions battling for release — especially after this recent Pon Farr business of Spock's. But he had never seen her blue eyes so cold, her features so unrevealing, her back so incredibly stiff. He thought she had relaxed somewhat after learning that Spock's "condition" had been alleviated. No matter now. But this! Two days, and it was wearing very thin.

He stared at the report, then finished it tersely, wondering what the problem was. She must be mad at him, as no one else seemed to be getting the freeze treatment. Putting the words into permanent storage on the patient's file, he turned over the last few days' events in his mind. He couldn't come up with a solution to the problem, however, and when the captain signalled him for a briefing he put it aside.

The next afternoon at Sickbay's weekly staff meeting, the mood was still present. "Yes, Dr. McCoy." "No, Dr. McCoy." "The reports are on your desk, Dr. McCoy." Coolly efficient and none of the usual friendly banter he'd come to expect from this woman who was a rock-steady Head Nurse and, he hoped, a friend. Finally he dismissed everyone, closing with, "Nurse Chapel, please stay a moment."

She sat again and waited patiently as the other staff members filed out. "Alright, Christine, out with it."

"Out with what, Doctor?" Her face was blandly innocent. He snorted in reply.

"This freeze job. What did I do to deserve it? And if not me, who the hell else are you mad at?"

Christine's eyes narrowed, her mouth tightened fractionally, signs he usually had to watch for in the captain or first officer. "You don't know?!" she asked incredulously.

"For pity's sake," McCoy exploded, if I knew what it was, I'da fixed it or else begged your forgiveness by now! Wotinhell's eating you?"

Christine dropped her eyes and her color heightened. Obviously she was remembering, and vividly. "That day we changed course for Vulcan," she ground out. "You made that damn <u>ingratiating</u> remark — in front of the captain." Her voice mimicked, "You never give up hoping, do you?"

Angrily she stood, paced the confines of the small room. "Dammit, Leonard, I could have been a section head — even a department head on this ship if I'd wanted it — with a rank equal to yours. But I took Medical because I'd always had a feel for it — not because of the privileges of rank." She whirled to face him. "I have as many degrees, as many years of experience and training as almost anyone on this ship — except maybe Spock. DID YOU HAVE TO MAKE ME LOOK LIKE A FOOL IN FRONT OF THE CAPTAIN?"

McCoy stared at her, then slumped slowly back into his chair. He thought back -- yes, he had said that. Condescending, unthinking. "God, Christine, I am sorry. I didn't realize--"

"You didn't realize," she repeated angrily. "As long as we're in Sickbay, you and I have a really fine relationship. But once you're out of here, I'm just another subordinate female. And I hate that!"

"I guess -- I do treat you differently off the job," McCoy admitted reluctantly. "But I never intended to."

Nurse Chapel softened. "I know. You do that, though. You, plural. Men. Men you're 'out with the boys', it's like a Jeckyll-Hyde switch." She relaxed enough to sit down. "Leonard, I'm not really mad any more. But -- when we're <u>not</u> working, could you try a little respect?"

He nodded solemnly. "Yes, ma'am." They exchanged a smile, McCoy slightly wary until he could really see that the frozen anger was gone. "Could I interest you in a little brandy?"



# Where Are the Clowns?

by Isabel Klein



The concept was as old as the caesars and as new as tomorrow, with origins firmly rooted on one world but at home on all. It was a cultural artifact -- shiny, bright, new -- glittering in the light of myriad suns.

It travelled from the home planet, arriving fast on the heels of the first colonizing families, its companions were Shakespeare and Tchaikowski and Piccasso.

The family tree was sprinkled with such names as Kelly and Barnum and Hanneford and Ringling. Like famous ancestors of centuries ago, the tents were raised in early morning and folded away each night as the magic and excitement evaporated, awaiting the next opening blare of trumpets. Of necessity, there were now many differences. And yet, if the trapeze artists relied more on their own proto-wings to fly from perch to perch than on the slender rod suspended by spiderly wire; and if the elephant had bred on another world far from Earth, and in truth did not much look like the holos of elephants stored in the library; and if the big cats had once prowled alien jungles — who was to say that this was therefore a lesser spectacle than that of earlier years and places far removed? The excitement was as infectious and the eagerness of the children was as difficult for adults to contain as ever it was, and the banners and posters announcing the great extravaganza were as generous in the use of language (and languages) as ever in the past.

In homes and schools and centers, the days were religiously marked on the calendars. Children talked of little else. Adults smiled and remembered how they had lived through the same anticipation in their not so distant youth.

As old as the caesars and as new as tomorrow -- the circus came to town.

The town, in this instance, was Starbase 11; the circus was only a distant cousin of "The Greatest Show in the Galaxy," but the audience was as enthusiastic as any — mostly Starfleet families and personnel enjoying a rare diversion from a bureaucratically routine life.



Susie's red pigtails whipped back and forth as her eyes darted from one side of the center — and only — ring to the other, her small mouth permanently rounded in wonder. Boffo the Clown was her favorite. She loved his bright pink hair and large red nose and the way he tripped over his oversize, floppy shoes. When he invited the children to join him one day, Suzie knew he was speaking directly to her.

Under the supervision of two harried adults, an untidy line of small persons moved out of the auditorium. In this orderly confusion it was possible for one small girl to wander away and attach herself to a group of Starfleet uniformed personnel. Everybody knew that Starfleet could do anything -- even help Susie run away to join the circus.



Captain's Log, Stardate 4510.5. Departed Starbase 11 as scheduled on course for designated coordinates, where sealed orders will be opened. Routine exchange of libraries completed. Ship resupplied. Crew enjoyed limited shore leave.

Jim Kirk's eyes traveled to each bridge station, his seemingly casual observations more intense than usual. He was working Gamma shift, which for Kirk was the middle of the night, following the laudable practice of "shift-rotation." It helped both morale and efficiency for the captain to occasionally make his presence felt during the less desirable watches. Crew members needed the opportunity to demonstrate just how well they performed their jobs, and Kirk believed in giving them the opportunity to do so.

He stifled another yawn, wishing he had had just one more cup of coffee before coming on duty. It wouldn't have been so bad had Kirk not just come off Alpha shift on the day side. Experience dictated that the best way to handle shift change was to keep going until Gamma shift was over, grab something to eat and go to bed, thereby establishing the new cycle. But these changeovers always created a strain and Kirk wondered if perhaps it was as useful a tool as he originally thought.

The turbolift doors opened, depositing a yeoman carrying a steaming cup of coffee, "Compliments of Dr. McCoy."

"My thanks to the doctor," Kirk replied, cautiously sipping the brew. "Tell him --- no, I'll tell him myself."

The yeoman turned away as Kirk placed the cup on the arm of his command chair, then pushed the communicator button.

"Bridge to Dr. McCoy."

"McCoy. You're welcome, Jim."

Kirk grinned. "I didn't say thank you yet."

"Didn't have to. Figured I'd be hearing from you about now."

"You figured right. Thanks, Bones. Bridge out."

Young Ensign BLSS at Navigation exchanged not-so-surreptitious glances with Lieutanant Zinzin at the helm. Chekov did it better, but give BLSS more practice and she, too, would be able to convey the meaning of an entire paragraph in one glance.

Somehow it always surprised crewmembers who did not see much of the captain that he was, after all, human, that there were people on board who had the temerity to address him as Jim. Wouldn't do, however, to appear too human. There was something to be said for "command mystique" and for maintaining a psychological distance getween captain and crew. At least the Monday morning quarterbacks didn't second guess you to your face.

It was the captain himself who found the discrepancy in crew numbers. The same pretty yeoman who had brought the coffee also brought the crew roster reports. Kirk scanned them quickly, spotting the erroneous figure.

"Yeoman, are these figures correct?" Kirk asked, all tiredness gone.

"Yes, Captain. Those are the computer readouts."

"Then, mister, we have one more crew member than assigned by Starfleet ... Mr. Morgan, engage the back-up intruder Alert System ... Security, this is the Captain, there is an intruder on board. I want him found. ... Mr. Spock to the bridge ... Mr. Morgan, I want to know why the automatics didn't sound alert when security was breached." Klaxons sounded throughout the ship. The captain was The Captain again.

"Mr. BLSS, how soon before we reach specified coordinates?"

"Three point six solar hours, sir!"

Kirk drummed his fingers against the arm of his chair, nearly knocking over the forgottem coffee. He drank it in a gulp, holding out the empty container for one of the security men to take.

Spock arrived at that moment, moved directly to the Science Station. The hapless Lieutanant Morgan, manning that post, stepped hurriedly out of the way, and nearly tripping over his own feet in the process.

"Mr. Spock, the computer failed to issue an alert when crew totals were exceeded by one."

"Most irregular, Captain." Spock's fingers were already flying over the control panel.

"Exactly. I want to know how and I want to know why and I want the malfunction corrected and I want it done now."

Exactly three point six hours later, Kirk left the bridge for his quarters to open the sealed orders. The intruder had not been found and all hands were now giving the captain as wide a berth as possible. Kirk's final words before leaving the bridge, broadcast throughout the ship, left no doubt as to the state of his temper or its possible effect on crew efficiency reports. The hunt for the intruder went on.

A short time later Kirk sat at his desk, his head in his hands, the orders before him on the monitor. As if he didn't have enough problems with the intruder — now this. Some days he wondered if perhaps he should have become a fireman after all. Diplomats! Imperious, dictatorial, supreme pains in the anatomy! It would be diplomats.

"Bridge, this is the captain. Come to course one-thirty Mark eleven. Continue radio silence." Aye, aye, sir," was the brisk answer.

"I'll be in my quarters if anyone should inadvertently discover anything."

Kirk moved towards the sleeping area, removing his shirt as he went, his eyes slowly adjusting to the darkened room. He did not see the small figure curied up on his bed until he almost sat on it, and even then he thought it probably just a shadow. But, the shadow moved, uncuring itself to fling arms and legs across the narrow bed, almost hitting Kirk in the process.

He moved back quietly, his eyes still on the bed, his hand groping for the wall panel communicator. "Bridge, this is the captain," he whispered. "Cancel security alert. I've found the intruder."

"Will you need assistance, Captain?" Spocks filtered voice came over the speaker.

"Not at the moment, Mr. Spock. Kirk out."

He paused, then hit the 'com button again. "Sickbay."

"Sickbay, McCoy," was the prompt reply, although the doctor should not have been on duty. "Shall I bring the aspirin, Jim?"

"Just yourself, Bones. I'm in my quarters. And make it fast."

"On my way. McCoy out."

The doctor let out a low whistle a few minutes later when he saw the "intruder" asleep on the bed. "Have you checked the porridge bowl?" he asked with glee.

"What do you mean, Bones?" Kirk's tone was distracted.

"Well, your chairs are intact, so the only thing left is, did she eat all your porridge?" McCoy paused for a moment, head tilted to one side while he studied the small figure. "The hair's the wrong color for Goldilocks, though."

The little girl stirred and was suddenly awake. She looked at the two men standing over her, studying first the captain and then the doctor. Finally, she held out her arms to Kirk, and with a big smile of welcome, said, "Daddy!"

McCoy chuckled. "Well, what do .you know about that."

"That's enough, Doctor," Kirk growled.

"I take it this is the intruder you've been turning the ship inside out looking for, although she's a little young for the Mata Hari routine."

Susie scrambled off the bed and ran to Kirk, holding out her arms to him. "Pick me up, Daddy. Pick me up!" she demanded.

Almost without thinking, Kirk did as ordered, handing Susie over to McCoy with instructions to take her to Sickbay and take care of her.

Susie didn't like the sound of that and clung tightly, her arms around Kirk's neck. "No. I want to stay with you."

"Jim, I think you've got a problem."

"Not me, Doctor, you. I have enough problems without this one."

Once more he tried to pry Susie's fingers loose, but she tightened her hold and in the end it was Kirk who carried her to Sickbay.

"Well, Bones," Kirk asked an hour later in McCoy's office, "is she Human or what?"

"She's Human, all right. Her name's Susie and she's almost six years old, which could mean anything from just five to nearly six. All the tests are normal. She's the kind who could put doctors out of business."

"Too normal?"

"I know what you're thinking and the answer is no. She's not an android or a surgically altered alien or anything else I know of but what she appears to be — a Human child, female, almost six years old. Name of Susie. One thing, though," McCoy added almost as an afterthought. "She keeps asking when she's going to see the clowns — when she's not asking for her 'Daddy'."

Kirk winced at the word. "The crew is going to have a field day with this. Why does she think I'm her father?"

"You'll have to ask her. When I did, she just gave me one of those superior female looks — you know the kind — or maybe you don't get them." When Kirk didn't react, McCoy continued more seriously. "I've tried to get her to switch to Uncle Jim. Might cause less comment if it works."

Kirk stood, yawned, and moved toward the door. "Get her something to eat and find her a place to sleep. And see what this clown business is all about."

McCoy was also on his feet. "Jim, any truth to the rumor that we're heading for Babel?" Kirk raised his eyes towards the ceiling. "So much for sealed orders."

"Sealed orders are only secret until the seal is broken, and then they're the property of the grapevine." McCoy gave Kirk a professional look. "Get some rest, Jim. You look as if you could use it." "Shift change. If I didn't have to, I'd never do it."

"Nothing in the regs that says you have to. Why don't you ask the captain to relieve you of it?"

"Yeah, why don't !?" Kirk replied as the door swished open and then closed behind him, leaving

McCoy with the problem of Susie.



Captain's Log, Stardate 4512.7. Although our intruder has been found, her identity remains a mystery, as does the failure of the computer to sound the alarm. Mr. Spock can find no reason for the failure. We are in orbit around Babel, preparing to beam up the diplomatic mission.

"I don't know which is worse," McCoy grumbled as he tugged at the collar of his dress uniform.

"Putting up with our passengers or putting on these monkey suits to 'welcome' them aboard ... on second thought, it's sort of appropriate."

Kirk merely smiled, but Spock rose to the bait.

"I presume, Doctor, that you are suggesting that the discomfort of the one is appropriate to the other $_{\rm o}$ "

"You might say that, Spock." McCoy paused, pulling at his collar again. "Considering everything, I think I'll stay in Sickbay for the duration."

"That, Doctor, is infinitely preferable to having you prowl the passageways of the ship."

"I do not prowl!"

Before Spock could respond, the transporter beam sparkled two figures into existence. Kirk said, "Gentlemen!", and moved forward to welcome his passengers.

Few things in the universe could surprise James T. Kirk. He had travelled too far, seen too much, experienced too many life-and-death situations. But the identity of the ambassador came close to shattering the control developed over a lifetime of unknowns.

"My old friend, Kirk. Still a captain, I see. Perhaps you're in the wrong fleet."

"Commander Koloth--" Kirk began, but the Klingon held up his hand.

"Ambassador."

Kirk smiled affably. "Of course, my mistake. Ambassador Koloth, welcome to the <u>Enterprise</u>." He gestured toward the waiting honor guard. "I believe you know my first officer, Commander Spock."

Koloth inclined his head in Spock's direction.

"And my chief medical officer, Dr. McCoy."

Again a genial acknowledgement of the introduction was given, while Kirk studied Koloth and his aide, Korax, who apparently had managed to survive the deadly game of assassination as it was played in the Klingon Empire. Neither had changed much, in spite of their changed status. Both still wore the ill-fitting black uniforms of the imperial Fleet; both still had the same black beards, Koloth's more satanic in appearance than before. Kirk had never seen a Klingon male without one — a cultural taboo?

"Gentlemen," Kirk invited the Klingons, "Lieutenant Masur will escort you to your quarters. You'll join me for dinner?"

"Our pleasure, Captain," Koloth responded, moving towards the door with Korax shadowing him. As the door swished closed, Spock was at the wall communicator panel alerting Security to the Klingon's presence and ordering around-the-clock surveillance.

Kirk dismissed the remaining members of the honor guard as McCoy asked, "Don't you think you should warn the crew we have the enemy aboard?"

"What enemy, Bones? I wasn't aware that we were at war," Kirk said lightly. "Besides, our position is clear. We will treat our passengers with all respect due their position, but I have no intention of giving them the store. And if the crew is not in possession of the identities, biographies, and personal peculiarities of our guest by now, I'll be very disappointed."

"Captain," Spock asked with the merest hint of puzzlement, "why should we give the Klingons the ship's stores?"

It was McCoy who answered, "Just another colloquialism, Spock. By now you should be used to them."
"By now, Doctor, I do my best to ignore them."

"Mr. Spock," Kirk interrupted, "I want a meeting of my senior staff in the main briefing room at 2100 hours to discuss the failure of the Intruder Alert System. You realize, of course, that if Susie hadn't stowed away, we would be sitting here with two Klingon fleet officers on board and no warning system."

Even with the back-up system in place the ship still felt vulnerable to him, and when the Enterprise was vulnerable, Kirk was vulnerable. Events seemed to be conspiring against him, manipulated by some unseen hand and all Kirk could do was be certain that each move was effectively countered. That — and wait until the pattern emerged so that he could a little manipulating of his own.



"Drink your milk, Susie," Kirk urged with a quick glance at his chronometer. He was due to host the Klingons' dinner shortly and Susie had taken forever to eat.

"Can I have ice cream for dessert tonight?" she asked as she picked up the glass, drinking the contents in one long gulp. "Do I have a white mustache now, Uncle Daddy?"

Kirk nodded, using a napkin to wipe Susie's face before sliding back his chair. "Come on, I'll drop you off in Sickbay."

"But I haven't had my dessert yet. Can I have ice cream? Vanilla? I had ice cream at the circus.

"The ice cream or the circus?" Kirk asked, curious. McCoy had mentioned something about clowns the night Susie had been found.

"Oh, both, Uncle Daddy. I like ice cream and I like the circus. I like the circus a lot." She stopped a minute, forehead wrinkled in thought. "I thought I would find a circus when I came here but I found you instead, Uncle Daddy. But," she tilted her head to scrutinize Kirk more carefully, "you're not like Boffo, but I think maybe you're almost as good!"

"Boffo?"

"The clown. You know, in the circus."

Kirk wasn't sure that he liked being compared to a clown and coming in second. But maybe from Susie it was a compliment.

"I like clowns, Uncle Daddy," she declared firmly, "and I like ice cream for dessert."

Kirk grinned, reaching out to tuck one stray braid behind an ear. "You want me to get in trouble with Dr. McCoy, giving you ice cream for dessert?"

"You won't get in trouble," she told him. "You're the captain and the captain is the boss."

"You seem very certain, Susie."

"Oh, everybody knows that."

"Well, since the captain is the boss and I'm the captain, if you want dessert tonight it will have to be fruit, and that's an order."

With a dramatic sigh, Susie accepted defeat on the subject of dessert. As every child knows, adults sometimes have to be humored. But, having given in on dessert, Susie attacked on another front. "Do you really have to go, Uncle Daddy? Can't you stay with me, just for awhile?" she pleaded. "We could play a game of cards," she added hopefully.

"I told you, Susie, I have to go to a special dinner."

"With those mean people in black," she finished, already in possession of the relevant details.

"Just how do you know about the 'mean people in black'?" Kirk asked as he got to his feet.

"Oh, I heard Uncle Bones talking about them. He doesn't like them. Do you, Uncle Daddy?"

How, Kirk wondered, to answer that? A "yes" would be lying and "no" could perhaps influence Susie's attitudes for a lifetime.

When he didn't respond immediately, Susie drew her own conclusions. "Well, I don't like them either!"
"Susie, I didn't say I didn't like them."

"You didn't have to, Uncle Daddy. I could tell." She hopped off her chair and headed for the door, Kirk following.

"That's not the way to Sickbay," he said as she headed in the opposite direction.

"I think I'll go to the rec room and see if Uhura's there. She's teaching me to sing," Susie called over her shoulder.

"Oh," Kirk said, bemused, in unconscious imitation of Susie. Uhura had taken on a difficult job
-- Susie exhibited an unreliable sense of pitch coupled with excessive volume.

Children, Kirk was beginning to understand, were not merely small adults. They seemed to operate with their own set of rules and their own behavior norms which adults did not comprehend. He was accustomed to being obeyed but Susie blithely ignored his requests, pursuing her own often contrary activities. As she skipped around a corner, he wondered if his ship would ever recover from Susie's visit. Or, for that matter, would the captain?



Dinner that evening featured the usual jockeying for position between adversaries, the polite conversation overlaying innate hostility, and in addition Kirk had Koloth to contend with -- and not for the first time. Their previous confrontations had ended with Kirk having the edge, but each time they met presented new challenges and new risks of coming off second best.

Korax was just plain unlikeable, but Kirk had to admire Koloth's style — the easy camaraderie he evinced in Kirk's presence was calculated to put Kirk at ease, and Kirk admitted to himself that at times Koloth almost succeeded. Koloth would, he knew, exploit any weaknesses, whether real or perceived. Mr. Nice Guy and Mr. Not-So-Nice Guy of the Klingon Diplomatic Corps and the Imperial Fleet. They presented interesting possibilities.

The guests arrived early, but Kirk and his officers were already present. Koloth was smiling as he asked, "Are we late?" and the captain was reminded of a line from Shakespeare: "That man should smile and smile and be a villain."

"Of course not, Ambassador." Just the slightest emphasis on the title. "We seek to honor your presence among us."

Korax stiffened at those words. "And do you also honor us with the guards you have continually dogging our steps?"

"Guards?" Kirk repeated with false innocence. "Not guards — escorts. We wouldn't want you to get lost on a strange ship. Think how embarrassing that might be."

"For whom. Captain?" asked Koloth smoothly.

"We have nothing to be embarrassed about, Ambassador. My crew can find their own way around the ship."

"Ha!" That was Korax. "You are afraid that we might steal some of your little secrets, your very little secrets."

"If our secrets are so small," Spock commented, "then it would surely be a waste of your time to attempt to locate them."

Ball back in your court, Kirk thought. Aloud, he offered drinks which Koloth sipped and Korax guiped. Conversation flowed, mostly laced with veiled insults. The meal was almost over when McCoy asked the question that had been foremost in many minds.

"Just how do you happen to be hitchhiking a ride on the Enterprise as far as Lorona, Ambassador? Why didn't one of your own ships pick up your party?"

"The ship which brought us to Babel had to be diverted to another planet — a ... natural disaster, I understand."

"It must have been a very large disaster to summon a starship from this far inside Federation space," Mr. Spock suggested. "Perhaps additional aid might be required."

"Klingons need no one's assistance," Korax replied hotly, before Koloth signalled him to silence.

"If additional assistance is needed, I shall of course request it from the nearest Federation facility or," Koloth's eyes swept around the table, "the nearest Federation starship."

"And," McCoy suggested, "plan a sneak attack on said starship if possible."

"Your lack of trust is reprehensible, Doctor," Koloth commented.

"My lack of trust mirrors your own, Ambassador."

"Perhaps. But since we share this galaxy, perhaps we should also share trust."

McCoy looked meaningfully from Koloth to Korax and back again. "Perhaps we have to learn to trust our friends before we can trust our enemies." Klingons routinely spied on each other, officially and otherwise.

Koloth turned from McCoy to Kirk. "You haven't said much, Captain."

Kirk smiled — he, too, could play the diplomat. "The host's responsibility is to see that the guests are pleasantly occupied. You make that responsibility very easy."

"it is the duty of the guest to ease the host's burden. It was my pleasure to fulfill that duty."

"And unfortunately, Ambassador, duty calls me in other directions, and I must bring this most

interesting evening to a close. The recreation facilities of my ship are at your disposal, as I believe
you've already been informed." Kirk smiled again, silently vowing that he would not so much as grin
for at least three solar days.

"One moment, Captain," Koloth called as Kirk reached the door.

"Mr. Ambassador?" Kirk turned back to the room.

"Just one question, Captain ... What is Susie?"

Kirk put just the right amount of worry and defensiveness in his voice as if somehow Koloth had discovered a most secret weapon that Kirk wished most fervently had been kept secret. "Susie, Ambassador?" He paused for effect. "Why, Susie is one of our little secrets, Ambassador." Again a pause. "One of our very little secrets."

One last plastic smile and Kirk was gone. Let the Klingons make what they could of Susie.

The meeting Kirk had called accomplished little. Everyone apparently had their own pet theory about the sabotage to the Intruder Alert System and Spock had spent his time shooting holes through the theories until logic proved that it was impossible for anyone to have done anything to the IAS and therefore the system was still operational.

One interesting but irrelevant fact had emerged, however. Susie's full name was Susan Kathleen McCafferty. It was Spock who had discovered that by the simple means of telling Susie that he needed it for the records — so that she wouldn't be confused with any other Susie on board. It was when he referred to her as a "random factor complicating an unknown matrix" that McCoy had demanded Spock speak English and Kirk decided that the discussion would yield little else of value.



The next evening, Kirk headed for the bridge to put in an appearance before going off duty, grateful to abandon Gamma shift while the Klingons were on board. He had just settled into the command chair when Lieutenant Watanabi, manning the communications console, announced, "Sir, Lorona Port Control requests you contact Advocate Chen once orbit has been established."

And just how did Advocate Chen know we were coming, Kirk wondered. "Did they explain further, Lieutenant?"

"No, Captain. Just delivered the message when I notified them of our pending arrival. Advocate Chen is available to speak with you, if you wish."

"I wish, Lieutenant."

Kirk drummed his fingers on the arm of his chair while waiting for the connection to be made. He reviewed everything he knew about Lorona, which wasn't very much. Friendly to the Federation, but not a member, Lorona allowed vessels of all worlds to use their port facilities. It was principally a trading planet, a convenient place for the exchange of goods and services between unfriendly peoples. The scrupulously honest Loronans tolerated no deviation from their strict code of behavior by either resident or visitor. Punishment was swift and severe and thus assured them their own continued prosperity and neutrality — that, plus the fact that Lorona was too valuable to all sides as a source of goods and information to jeopardize visitation rights. Kirk envied their security while finding the people dull and uninteresting. He preferred a rogue or two to liven things up.

Advocate Chen was adamant. It was of the utmost importance that he meet with Captain Kirk immediately — or with any starship captain who happened past his planet. But since the Enterprise was making the first appearance, then it must be Kirk.

"Can't you give me any more information, Advocate?" the captain asked. "A prolonged stopover at this time would be most inconvenient."

"Can convenience be weighed against the continued friendship of Lorona? Surely a legitimate request from a friendly world should be honored, Captain — unless you are engaged in a life-saving mission."

For just a moment Kirk was tempted to take the out so nicely handed to him by the Advocate, but little would be gained. If Chen were that determined to talk with a starship captain, the matter just could be important enough to warrant a meeting. Besides, Kirk's orders stated that he was to make contact with <u>Devisor</u> in Lorona space to effect transfer of the diplomatic mission and that might possible result in their waiting around until <u>Devisor</u> arrived. Planetary disasters couldn't be relied upon to keep to schedule.

"No life-saving mission, Advocate. However, I shall beam down to your office as you request. Have an assistant contact my communications officer to make the arrangements. Kirk out."

It wasn't until the transmission had ended that Kirk remembered that Advocates were lawyers or judges or some such on Lorona and therefore whatever Chen had to say must deal with some aspect of the law and probably the violation thereof by a Federation citizen. An unpleasant prospect at best.

"Mister Watanabi, signal <u>Devisor</u> on Klingon command frequencies that we are approaching rendezvous planet of Lorona. Continue signalling at specified intervals until message acknowledged."

"Aye, sir."

Kirk got up from his command chair, stretched, permitted himself a yawn, and moved toward the lift. "You have the con, Mister Zinzin. Mister Watanabi, log me off duty. Good night, all."

A chorus of "Night, Captain," followed him to the lift. First stop would be Recreation, then his guarters and bed.

The main recreation room was crowded with crewmembers, who studiously ignored Kirk's presence. Sulu was there, showing a reluctant Chekov the finer points of fencing. Koloth and Korax were seated at a small table, intently studying what appeared to be a Klingon version of chess, their "escorts" seated nearby.

Uhura was the center of a large group urging her to sing just one more song before leaving. Kirk programmed a cup of coffee and then stood leaning against a wall, near enough for Uhura's rich, velvet voice to ease the day's tenstions without him really being part of the group.

Out of the corner of his eye, Kirk saw Spock enter, look around quickly and then head in Kirk's direction.

"Captain, Mr. Scott and I have discovered how the IAS was subverted."

Kirk nodded, took a final sip of the coffee, listening to the last notes of Uhura's song as he followed his first officer out of the room, a departure noted by Ambassador Koloth with a curt nod in the captain's direction. So much for bed, not that Kirk would have been able to sleep, not with so many unanswered questions. But now, he told himself, we know the How of it.

"How" turned out to be deceptively simple. The IAS programming had been altered by the simple

addition of a "GOTO" statement which caused the computer to bypass the command to sound alert. It was simple -- crude, really -- and therefore not easily detected by the sophisticated equipment on the Enterprise.

"Apparently, the false programming was introduced into the system with the routine library update,"

Spock explained. "There is no indication that it was directed at the Enterprise specifically. Rather
a case of the next Federation vessel in port got the false programming."

"Aye, a child could 'ave done it. That's how crude it was," Scott added.

"You don't think ... " Kirk began.

"Och, no, Captain. The wee lassie would never think of something like this." Scott was shocked at the very idea.

"And, I agree with Mr. Scott, Captain. Susie is not responsible for the sabotage."

"Then," Kirk mused, "we just happened to be 'it" as far as Advocate Chen of Lorona is concerned. The first Federation Starship to pass his way and the first Federation starship to arrive to pick up the false programming."

"Coincidence, Captain?" Spock enquired.

"Perhaps, perhaps not. But I don't like coincidences."

"Would Ambassador Koloth's presence on board also be considered a coincidence?"

"There's no way of knowing, Mr. Spock. We picked up those orders at Starbase 11 where we also picked up the library tapes. But there is no way Advocate Chen could know we were heading in his direction, since we didn't know ourselves until after the ambassador was on board, but he did — at least he knew a Federation starship was heading his way. And, we still don't know why the Advocate wants to see me, other than for some kind of legal matter."

"I dinna trust lawyers," Scott stated flatly. "Nothing good e'er came from havin' anythin' to do wi'em. I wouldna meet this one, if I were you, Captain. And that's a fact."

Kirk smiled. "What harm can it do just to meet someone, Scotty? He can't confiscate the ship."
It was a joke, but Scott didn't laugh and was still shaking his head as he left the briefing room.

"Spock, I want you to see to the transfer of the ambassador and his party to <u>Devisor</u> while I'm on Lorona."

"! was not aware that we had heard from Devisor, Captain."

"We haven't," Kirk told him, "but you can bet that she'll be waiting for us when we arrive."

"Vulcan's never bet. Captain." Spock informed him with just a touch of haughtiness.

"My mistake, Mr. Spock," Kirk answered, remembering the many times that Spock had done just that with lives at stake and more.

"If that's all, Captain ... "

"Of course, Mr. Spock. Good night."

"Good night, Captain."

A few minutes later Kirk was in his quarters, sifting through the various reports and tapes that had accumulated that day. He promised himself that as soon as this mission was over he would spend whatever time was necessary to clean up the deepening mess littering his desk.

Susie had all but evicted him from his quarters. She was asleep on his bunk, her clothes, miniature Fleet uniforms with black pants and gold tunic, were scattered about. There was even a game or two among the mess on his desk. McCoy's attempt to substitute "Uncle Daddy," a phrase Susie inserted after every other word. Kirk picked up the sleeping child, bedclothes and all, and completed the now nightly ritual of carrying her down to Sickbay where the nurse on duty took her from him, putting her to bed in one of the wards. Kirk admitted to himself he just might miss her a bit when she left them.

One more chore to be completed before turning in. McCoy was already in bed and there was a good deal of grumbling before the door was opened with a grunt. "I don't make night calls. Take two aspirin and come back in the morning." The doctor didn't bother to get out of bed, propping himself up on one elbow.

"I won't have time in the morning, Bones," Kirk told him. "I want you to try to find out where Susie's people are when we get to Lorona. There's a Federation office there which might be able to help. Starbase 11 may already have sent out an alert; somebody there must have missed her."

"Too bad we can't keep her, Jim. She's a nice little thing."

"Nice little things have no place on starships, Doctor," Kirk admonished .

"Oh, I don't know," came the slow drawi, "there's a new ensign in Engineering who can transfer to Sickbay any time she wishes."

"You're a dirty old man, Doctor," Kirk told him.

" I resent the adjective 'old'," was McCoy's indignant reply. "Now will you get out of here and

let a dirty old man dream of 'nice young things'."

"Susie won't be safe around you in a couple of years, Doctor."

"in Susie's case, I think it will be the other way around. The male population of the Federation won't be safe around her. Good night, Jim." McCoy turned over on the bed, presenting his back to his captain. "Don't slam the door when you leave."

Kirk grinned and left the cabin, the door swishing quietly closed behind him.



What harm Advocate Chen could do was evident within minutes of Kirk's arrival at the Ministry. Advocate Chen introduced a Mr. Carney, who handed Kirk a scrolled document. Kirk, who lived in a virtually paperless environment, turned the fragile parchment over in his hands several times before slipping off the encircling ribbon and rapidly reading the contents. Then — disbelieving — he read it again, this time more slowly, controlling his rising anger by mentally drumming his fingers on Mr. Carney's smooth head.

"I don't understand this, Advocate. You have no authority to attach my ship."

"But I do, Captain. Once you achieved standard orbit around Lorona you became subject to her laws. Since Starfleet owes Mr. Carney for services rendered and has not paid for those services, Mr. Carney is entitled to attach Starfleet property until such time as the debt is settled. Our laws are quite clear."

"You can't attach my ship," Kirk repeated more forcefully. "Federation law--"

Chen folded his arms, his hands slipping into the long sleeves of his elaborate robe of office.

"But Federation law does not apply here, Captain. We are a free, associated planet, not a member of
the Federation. Perhaps if you have an attorney on board your vessel, your position could be explained
by a member of your crew."

This was not the time to point out to the Advocate that he, Kirk, was the sole arbitrator of Federation law in many parts of the quadrant. Rather, he turned to Mr. Carney, quickly taking the measure of the man. Carney was not a large person, but hid latent strength behind loose clothing. His movements were those of a trained athlete — controlled, easy, assured. He was not a man to be misjudged by his lack of size or his rough manner.

"Why didn't you take your complaint to the local Federation office, Mr. Carney?" Kirk asked reasonably.

"I did. You know what they told me, Kirk? They told me it was a 'Fleet problem', that's what they said. Bunch of bureaucrats," Carney spit out. "Don't know what it is for a man to need the money that's owed him. Get all their own money from other people's pockets."

Kirk knew Carney was telling the truth. That was exactly the reaction he would have expected from a Federation representative when presented with a bill for Starfleet.

Playing the diplomat, Kirk suggested that he and Carney work together to solve the problem. "Surely you and I, being reasonable men, should be able to settle this between us and not bother Advocate any further."

"Ain't nothing to settle, Kirk. I want my money Starfleet owes me. I need that money. You gonna pay?"

"Mr. Carney," Kirk said smoothly, "I'm afraid that I haven't the authority to settle the account with you. Think of what would happen if I honored every bill that came my way with Starfleet's name on it. Every swindler in this galaxy and probably the next would be sending me invoices for payment." Kirk spread his hands in a helpless gesture. "I'm sure you see my position."

"Bah!" "Bah!" Carney grunted. "Starship captains can do whatever they like, pretty much whenever they like. Everybody knows that."

Kirk allowed a hint of steel to enter his voice. "Then everybody knows wrong, Mr. Carney. I am subject to rules and regulations and orders from superiors and audits by accountants just like everyone else. And I assure you that those accountants would raise all kinds of hell should I honor your request."

Carney's attitudes hardened even more. His fists balled as he assumed more of a fighter's stance. "You listen to me, Kirk. I ain't afraid of you and I ain't afraid of Starfleet. I want my money and I'm going to keep your ship here until I get it."

"My ship leaves orbit when I say," Kirk responded. "If it remains here for any length of time, it will be by my choice, not yours. Do I make myself clear, Mr. Carney?"

Chen interrupted the rapidly escalating argument. "I doubt that you will leave before the matter is settled, Captain. Starfleet has a certain reputation to maintain as law-abiding representatives of the Federation. And you, Captain, will do nothing to jeopardize that position. No starship commander

would. You will obey our laws lest the honor of your ship and the organization you represent be tarnished. Your pride, if nothing else, will keep you here."

"The honor of my ship is safe in my hands, Advocate." Kirk replied stiffly. He turned back towards Carney. "When you are ready to discuss this matter further, Mr. Carney, contact my ship — if it's still in orbit!"

Kirk turned on his heel with military precision and strode out of the Advocate's office. He could just imagine Starfleet Command's reaction if he honored Carney's bill; he could also imagine the Federation Council's reaction if he single-handedly turned Lorona from a friend of the Federation to overt friendship with the Klingons. No career would be safe after something like that.

Kirk was outside the Ministry walking rapidly towards the Port Manager's office when Spock came up beside him from a side street. They kept pace with each other, neither saying anything for several minutes, until at last Kirk blurted out, Some Joker's put a lien on the Enterprise and the Advocate ruled that we can't leave until he says so."

Repressed anger surged to the surface and Kirk increased his pace in attempt to "walk himself" into a better mood. He didn't slow down until almost colliding with a native who said some rather uncomplimentary things about Starfleet in general and Starfleet officers in particular.

"Jim, I hardly think that collisions with Lorona's citizens will help free the ship. It may, in fact, hinder further attempts."

Kirk slowed rejuctantly. "You're correct, of course, Mr. Spock. I just find bureaucrats difficult to deal with." Kirk remembered that that was also Mr. Carney's position and grimmaced.

"A logical observation, Captain."

Kirk looked quickly at his first officer, seeking confirmation of the impression that Spock had just made a joke at Kirk's expense, but Spock's face wore its usual imperturbable mask. Vulcans never joke, Kirk reminded himself, but every so often ....

Aloud, he said, "I don't know whether to be pleased that you agree with me or disturbed that somehow by agreeing with me you're really expressing the opposite."

"Captain, it is well known that bureaucrats are notoriously unable to cope with anything that is not spelled out in their job descriptions. Any occurrence outside the norm causes a severe attack of indecision and an inability to initiate action."

"Then you agree with me, Spock?"

Aggrieved, Spock answered, "I thought I just said that, Captain."

The pace slowed even more as Kirk's anger dissipated. "Any word from Devisor?"

"None, Captain. Either they are ignoring our attempts to contact them or they are not in the area."

Kirk considered this new information, silently weighing his options. "Well," he finally stated,

"we can't leave until Devisor arrives to take our passengers. And, since we can't leave, we might as

well go along with Mr. Carney's little game until we find out what that game is."

"Mr. Carney, Captain?" Spock prompted.

It was then that Kirk realized he had not yet told his first officer the entire contents of his meeting with Advocate Chen. Spock's reaction was predictable.

"Fascinating, but illogical to believe that a starship can be held as collateral on an unpaid debt, or that Lorona law would apply in any event. If Advocate Chen's position was valid, Starfleet would find itself the continual victim of blackmail by whatever planet chose that course of action."

"Illogical or not, Advocate Chen expects us to comply with the terms specified or give Starfleet and the Federation a bad name in this sector."

"How much money does Mr. Carney say he is owed?"

"He doesn't. He just says he wants his money .... Wait a minute, it should be on these papers they gave me." Kirk fished out the crumpled scroll from under his jersey where he had tucked it into the waistband of his pants. He unrolled the paper, straightening the creases as best he could, his eyes scanning down the page, until he let out a whistle. "Mr. Carney suffers from delusions."

Spock moved closer to see the figure Kirk was pointing at. "Either that, or a most creative imagination," he added.

"I suggest, Mr. Spock, that we call on Mr. Carney and see if he would be interested in something other than money in settlement of the debt. I had the impression in Chen's office that Mr. Carney didn't want to settle. It would be useful to find out."

"Do you know how to contact him" Spock asked.

"I don't, but Chen certainly does.' Kirk hurried off looking for a local communicator kiosk, and soon had the information.

"Mr. Carney owns a circus that's playing here," Kirk reported. "There was also a circus playing

at Starbase 11 when we were there. Susie thought we could take her to it when she stowed aboard. I think, Mr. Spock, we have several reasons for visiting Mr. Carney."

"Indeed, Captain, and those reasons would seem to be compelling," Spock agreed as Kirk hailed a ground taxi and gave directions to the driver.

The circus tent was just being raised as they arrived on the lot. The peak of the tent was sliding up the center pole using ancient rigging techniques borrowed originally from the sailing ships that had plied Earth's oceans. Kirk was surprised, and secretly pleased, that the old methods were still employed. Spock found the practice interesting, but illogical in view of all the modern methods that could be employed to produce the same effect. But judging from the number of onlookers gathered to watch the process, Kirk guessed that part of the reason for raising a tent was to attract people to come to the show later in the day. There was even a sprinkling of Enterprise crewmen in the audience.

"Uncle Daddy!" a young voice called and Kirk turned to find Susie running towards him, McCoy trailing in her wake.

"Didn't know you were a circus fan, Jim ... didn't know I was until today," McCoy greeted them.

"This certainly isn't one of your usual shore leave activities, Bones," Kirk commented as Susie's hand slipped into his.

"Well, Susie wanted to come and ... well," he glanced down at the little girl whose hand was confidently tucked into the captain's. "Well," McCoy's voice faded away. "I'll tell you later, Jim."

Kirk nodded and the four of them walked over to the small portable building with "Office" on the door. Mr. Carney was inside, at least the voice was Mr. Carney's; the face was that of a clown.

"Buffo," Susie shouted and ran to him, tackling him around the legs as she had so often done to Kirk. The captain felt a brief twinge of something he did not want to identify.

Carney -- Buffo the Clown -- disengaged Susie's hands with less gentleness than Kirk would have expected.

"What do you want, Kirk? If you haven't brought my money, then I'll see you in court."
"What money, Jim?" McCoy asked, perplexed.

Kirk motioned him to silence. "Mr. Carney, just how much money do you claim Starfleet owes you?"

"You know the figure, Kirk. It was on the papers I gave you. But since you can't, I'll remind ya."

And he named the same absurd amount, totally beyond the capacity of any starship captain to pay.

It was Spock who replied. "Mr. Carney, I do not believe that Starfleet can actually owe you that much money. I can conceive of no service that you could possibly render to justify that large an amount. Therefore, your reason for making such a request can have nothing to do with money owed to you and must therefore concern something else entirely."

Carney looked from Spock to Kirk. "I'll bet he's great in a poker game .... Okay, Kirk, I do need something from you, but only because Starfleet does owe me money."

"Suppose we talk about it and see what can be done," Kirk suggested. "What can I do for you, Mr. Carney?"

"You can give me and my circus a lift to our next destination. If Starfleet had paid me on time, I'd be able to pay our way, but it didn't and I can't and I can't stay here and mess up our schedule. We have contracts to fulfill and if we don't show up, somebody will be dragging us into court .... That's where I got the idea of attaching your ship, Kirk. And ... " Carney seemed to have trouble expressing himself, "Weil, if we don't -- a circus has a contract with its audience," he beamed at Susie, "even if not a written one. We can't disappoint the kids."

"Koloth is never going to go for this, Jim," McCoy whispered.

Kirk ignored the comment, concentrating on Carney, whose words were certainly at variance with his actions earlier when Susie had thrown herself at him. The stated objection to disappointing the children didn't ring true, but Kirk let it pass. It was clear that Carney's real intention was to get aboard the Enterprise. And if that's what he wanted, well, Kirk would see to it that Carney got his wish. Once on board the truth would come out, for Kirk was certain that somewhere there was a "truth" in this unlikely chain of events and he was determined to find it.



Captain's Log, Stardate 4517.8. Lorona Port Control has relayed a message from <a href="Devisor">Devisor</a> that they are unable to rendezvous at this time and request that we deliver <a href="Ambassador Koloth">Ambassador Koloth</a> and his party to the nearest Klingon outpost world. We have been unable to contact <a href="Devisor">Devisor</a> ourselves, which implies either <a href="Devisor">Devisor</a> is out of range of our subspace radio, operating under radio silence, or the message was not from Devisor

in the first place.

Since I am committed to transporting the circus to their next port, I have little choice but to transport both parties; the ship has taken on the aspect of a passenger liner. Little course deviation is required. Ambassador Koloth has lodged a formal complaint to the presence of Carney's people and his objection is so noted in this log entry.

Again, I feel I am being forced to do the bidding of another's hand. I am not at all comfortable with that idea. I have placed the crew on minimum alert status and assigned security the task of keeping our passengers separated from each other as much as possible.

"What didn't you want to say in front of Susie, Bones?" Kirk asked while sitting on the edge of McCoy's desk. "And, have you got something--"

"--for a headache? Coming right up, Jim." The doctor swiveled in his chair and opened a cabinet behind him. Two glasses appeared followed by a bottle of Saurian brandy from McCoy's private stock.
"Doctor's orders," he told Kirk, who was declining with a shake of the head.

"Well, maybe you don't want it," McCOy told him, "but I do. It's a lot more tasty than aspirin."
"But is it as effective?"

"You'll have to decide that for yourself, Captain."

Kirk took the glass and sipped it, letting the fiery liquid slowly trickle down his throat. "Aren't there regulations about drinking on duty?"

"It's medicinal. I'm the doctor and if I say it's medicinal, it's medicinal!"

"Okay, Bones, what's what with Susie? Can't they find her people?"

"She hasn't got any people, not close, that is. Her parents were Fleet personnel, lost on the Chaffee last month. Susie doesn't know yet. She was going to school on Starbase 11 and was due to leave for Earth on the next ship heading in that direction. She has distant family there. But Susie had other ideas, as we know. She thinks you're her father because all she really knew about him was from a picture, and the shirts are the same color. We're to bring her back to Starbase 11 when we finish this run. Orders will be coming through from Fleet on that. We could have left her on Lorona, but ... "

"No, we couldn't," Kirk said fiercely. "Starfleet takes care of its own." And then he remembered that Korax had expressed the same attitude when Federation assistance to the Klingons was mentioned at the dinner.

Kirk rose, not bothering to finish his drink. "I'll be on the bridge," he said, stopping as he neared the door. "I'll tell her when the time is right."

"Jim, there's never a 'right time'."

"I know, Bones, I know."

Kirk stopped off at the main recreation room for "coffee to go." Susie was there, lying on one side of a couch, her legs up behind her, chin propped up on her hands; her whole attention was focused on Ensign Chekov, who sat next to her, his hands moving rapidly about as he spoke. Kirk eased his way over to them, curious about what could keep the normally volatile Susie quiet for even a few minutes.

Just as he reached them, Chekov made a sweeping motion with one arm, hitting Kirk's hand and sending the coffee flying. Hot liquid sprayed both of them, not that Chekov noticed. He was busy apologizing to his captain for the accident while Kirk brushed ineffectually at the stain on his sleeve. The look he gave Chekov was calculated to stop him in his tracks.

"Ensign, just what was so engrossing that you found it expedient to knock the coffee out of my hand?"

"I vas teaching Susie, Keptin."

"Teaching her? Teaching her what?" Kirk asked. Before Chekov could answer, Susie came rushing up with a towel and started wiping up the spilled liquid. Kirk hadn't even seen her scamper away.

"History, sir," Chekov was saying. "I vas teaching her history."

"History?!" Kirk repeated, dismayed. "You were teaching history?" For Chekov, all history was contained within the boundaries of Mother Russia.

"Yes, Keptin." Chekov was aggrieved by the captain's tone. "History is really werry simple. All you have to remember is—"

Kirk interrupted him. "That everything was inwented by a little old lady from Leningrad." Kirk paused, watching Chekov's look of surprise.

"Ah, you know that too, Keptin."

"Carry on, Ensign," Kirk said, shaking his head as he moved toward the door. Someone was going to have to "unteach" history to Susie somewhere down the road.

"Uncle Daddy!"

The soft buzz of conversation in the room stilled for a moment, then returned, this time at a higher decible level. Kirk groaned inwardly, visions of being known forever throughout the Fleet as "Uncle Daddy" before him. Susie's hand slipped into his and she walked along as he left recreation, heading for the turbolift and the bridge.

"Uncle Daddy," Susie said again, this time pulling on his arm urgently.

Kirk stopped and looked down, smiling at the red hair escaping wildly from two pigtails, the small face a sea of freckles, and a look of distress clouding the usually bright blue eyes.

"Yes, Susie, what's the problem?" Problem solving was a Kirk specialty.

"Did you have trouble with your sixes?"

"Sixes? I don't think I know--"

"Yes, you do," Susie insisted. "Sixes! You know. Six times one is six. Six times two is twelve. Six times three is eighteen. Those sixes."

Kirk couldn't remember learning his "sixes" and avoided answering the question by asking one of his own. "Are you having trouble, Susie?"

"Yes," was the frustrated sigh. "The six times eight one. Mr. Spock says you have to know your tables first before you can do anything else."

"Mr. Spock says that, does he?"

"Yes," Susie answered solemnly. "He thinks the sixes are very important." Susie's tone indicated that she thought otherwise.

"And when did Mr. Spock tell you all this?" Kirk asked, surprised that his usually taciturn first officer had taken an interest. On second thought, maybe it wasn't so surprising after all.

"When I have my lesson, that's when." Susie was infuriatingly vague at times.

"When is that? And what's Mr. Spock teaching you with the sixes?"

"In the afternoon, after he comes off duty. I'm learning arithmetic. He says I'm very intelligent — for a Human child."

Kirk noted the pride in Susie's voice and wanted to laugh. He could just hear Spock's tone as he complimented her on her Human intelligence.

"Well, Susie, I agree with you. The sixes are not that easy, but if Mr. Spock says you can learn them, I know you can." He paused, recalling the conversation with McCoy. Sometime soon he would have to tell Susie that her parents weren't coming back this time. Perhaps now — no, Kirk had a better idea. "Susie, how would you like to come up to the bridge with me?" The bridge was usually off-limits. There had been a problem or two earlier.

"I'd like that, but I can't, Uncle Daddy. I have to go to the gym."

"Yes, Mr. Sulu and I do our exercises now. You could come along with us, if you wanted to. Mr. Sulu wouldn't mind."

"I'll have to pass this time, Susie. I have to go to the bridge, so you'd better run along to the qym." McCoy had apparently recruited widely in complying with Kirk's "take care of her" order.

"Aye, aye, Captain," Susie replied and began to run down the corridor, braids flying out behind her. Kirk watched as she slowed, turned around so that now she was scooting backwards, lifted her hand in a perfectly awful imitation of the Vulcan salute, called "Live Long and Prosper, Uncle Daddy," and turned back, disappearing around a bend. Arithmetic wasn't the only thing Susie was learning from Spock.

Later, Kirk moved easily around the upper level bridge, hands clasped behind him, checking first one station then another, seeing for himself the readouts detailing the health of his ship. He reached the science station, peering over Spock's shoulder for a moment before saying softly, "The sixes are not that easy, Mr. Spock."

"Sir?" Even a Vulcan could be caught off guard.

"You heard me, Mr. Spock."

Spock, swiveling to look directly at Kirk, lifted an eyebrow in inquiry. In reply, he received Kirk's most disarming grin, and with a "I'll never understand Humans" shrug, Spock turned back to his station.

Kirk moved away as casually as he had toured the rest of the bridge, returning to his command chair and a now-cold cup of coffee. He drank it quickly, actively disliking the taste. Now he had to get rid of the empty cup, a continual problem since the bridge of a starship is not equipped with

waste chutes. He bowed to the inevitable, and signalled to one of the security men, handing him the empty cup.

Kirk wished that he could as easily rid himself of the Klingons and the circus troop. Already there had been angry quarrels between them, and Kirk had ordered the circus people to confine themselves to their cabins or to a smaller recreation room near the ship's gym.

There was a connection between the bypassed Intruder Alert System and the presence of the Klingons and Carney's people on board. It was too much to believe that this same group of performers should be on Starbase 11 and Lorona and that they would secure passage on the Enterprise while the Klingon diplomatic party was on board and the IAS off-line. And just where did the Klingons fit into the picture? They could have sabotaged the IAS, but why? Of course, the Klingon High Command would very much like to get their hands on a Federation starship, and the Enterprise and her crew were not unknown to them, but would they use such a crude device to gain access? Then Kirk remembered just how long it had taken them to find that crude device.

Out of the corner of his eye Kirk saw Lieutenant Uhura take the transdater from her ear and swivel towards him.

"Captain, Security has been called to the main recreation room. There is an apparent altercation between the Klingons and several of the circus people."

Kirk was out of his chair and moving toward the turbolift. "Mr. Spock, with me. Mr. Scott, you have the con. If you do not hear from us in five minutes, flood Recreation with tranquilizer gas."

Kirk was already through the lift door, Spock right behind him. It had started, Kirk knew -- whatever had brought them all to this point in space and time.

The scene in the recreation room resembled an old-time western "Mexican Standoff." Koloth and Carney stood facing each other, scant meters apart. Behind Carney stood the rest of his people. Behind Koloth and to the side stood Korax with the Enterprise crew ranged behind them. Carney held a phaser on Koloth. The circus people and the Enterprise security personnel held phasers on each other. Koloth was weaponless, as was Korax. Carney's eyes didn't shift as Kirk and Spock entered the room, though other circus members did look in their direction, leveling phasers.

Kirk edged through the security forces to stand in front of Koloth. Spock took up a similar position in front of Korax.

"What's going on here, Carney? Put downthat phaser," Kirk ordered the circus owner. The expected opening. Keep doing the expected. Lull Carney into anticipating the next move, until ....

"You are guests on my ship, but if you don't put those phasers away, I'll have to confine you and your people to the brig."

"You threatening me, Kirk? I told you before I wasn't afraid of you. I have the phaser, and if you don't move aside, you'll die before the Klingon. Makes no difference to me who dies."

Kirk edged slightly forward, moving closer to Carney. He raised his hand in appeal. "Whatever it is it can be settled without killing. Give me the phaser, Carney, and--"

"Don't try to change me, Kirk. I'm doing what I have to do," Carney declared rightously.

The captain eased his weight forward just a bit, sliding his foot an inch. Keep Carney talking, focused on himself rather than Koloth, at least until Scott knocked them all out with the gas. "What do you hope to gain by killing Koloth?" Kirk gestured toward the Klingon. "I don't much like Klingons myself, but -- live and let live. And we do have a treaty with them."

"Had, Captain. I'm going to destroy that treaty by simply pulling this trigger."

"That would mean war, Carney. No same man wants war."

"You're right, Kirk. No same man does. And that's just what I plan to prevent. As soon as the news of Koloth's death gets back to the Klingons, they will attack in revenge. The Federation will defend itself. And then the Organians will step in and destroy all the weapons of both the Klingons and the Federation. And we will not be able to make war any more."

Spock answered, distracting Carney's attention as Kirk inched closer. "The Romulans will still be able to make war, and the Kzinti and the Orion pirates will still be active, while the Federation will be unable to defend itself against them and rather than peace, you will create intragalactic chaos."

Spock's words cause soft murmuring among the circus troop. Apparently they had not thought of this effect of their actions.

"I didn't--" Carney began, then turned back toward the captain. "No, you don't -- you're trying to draw my attention away from the fact that Kirk is trying sneak closer." He waved the phaser in Kirk's direction. "Back up there, you."

"Mr. Spock is right," Kirk said, retreating only slightly. "Your plan would lead to death and destruction of whole planets, wanton loss of life, and for what? What satisfaction can that be to you?"

Carney's breathing became more rapid, but the phaser was held steadily aimed at the middle of Kirk's chest. "I'd get my revenge. I'd get them for killing my people"

"I don't understand, Carney," Kirk said. "I thought you wanted peace, and now you're talking about revenge."

"They killed my people. Killed them in cold blood. Blew up the ship."

Kirk's voice was a shade softer, encouraging confidences. "When was this, Carney --- recently?"

"No. Before." The words were jerky, as if images pushed back to the edges of the mind were becoming vivid. The phaser wavered.

"Before the treaty, Carney?"

"Yes. Before the treaty. We were going to perform and the Klingons destroyed the ship. With no warning. They killed everybody." Carney grasped the phaser in both hands to steady it. "Now, they won't kill anybody ever again."

"And you weren't with them, were you. You weren't there to die with them. You had to survive to live with it."

"It wasn't fair. I should have been with them." Carney's eyes were tiny slits. Kirk tensed his muscles, ready to spring at the phaser and knock it out of Carney's hand.

With a swish, the door from the corridor opened and Susie rushed in, throwing herself at Carney. "Boffo! Boffo!"

The phaser now pointed directly at Susie. Kirk threw himself in front of Susie while Spock knocked Korax into Koloth and the three of them fell to the floor. The soft hiss of the paralyzer gas filled the room before anyone else could move.

Kirk came to with someone slapping his face. He didn't think, he reacted, grabbing the individual and tossing him up and over to land on the floor with a thud and a grunt.

Kirk was quickly on his feet ready to pursue the attack when McCoy struggled up to a sitting position. "How many times do I have to tell you it isn't nice to use judo throws on your doctor ... especially when he's trying to help you?"

Kirk held out his hand, pulling McCoy to his feet. "Sorry, Bones, but you should know that that particular gas can wear off quite suddenly." Kirk looked about the room as others were coming out of their drug induced sleep. "Susie?" he asked.

"She's okay. It will wear off in a minute."

Security had things under control. The circus performers were being herded out of the room. Koloth and Korax were also awake and charging Kirk, Koloth mouthing Klingon curses and Korax ready for a fight with anybody he could reach.

McCoy went to where Susie lay unconscious, passed his medscan over her body, then lightly slapped her face. Susie's eyes opened and then after a moment, she was scrambling to her feet.

Kirk's attention was drawn away from Susie as Koloth accosted him.

"Is this Federation protection? Is this Federation security? Starfleet Command will hear about your negligence, Kirk. "I'll break you!"

"You do that, Ambassador," Kirk told him. "In fact, we'll both submit reports."

The 'com panel whistled. "Bridge to Recreation Room. What is your status?"

"This is the captain. We're secure here, Scotty." Kirk suddenly realized that klaxons were sounding a red alert. "You can secure from Red Alert. Plot a course to Starbase 11 and initiate. Have Uhura try to contact the <u>Devisor</u> again. Our guests would like to depart as soon as possible."

"Aye, Captain. Bridge out."

The room was rapidly clearing. Spock and McCoy stood to one side while Security ushered out the last of Carney's people. Susie was quiet, her hand tucked into McCoy's, apparently none the worse for her experiences. Kirk motioned her to join him, taking her hand and leading her to where Koloth and Korax were standing on the other side of the room.

"Ambassador, may I present our secret weapon, Susie. I know you've spent some time trying to locate her, and that you would feel cheated if I didn't introduce her. After all, she saved your life."

Koloth glared first at Kirk and then at Susie. Korax growled. Susie growled back.

"The Earther would not have pulled the trigger," Korax scoffed. "Earthers are afraid of death.
Klingons welcome it."

"That I can understand," Kirk commented. "Ambassador, don't you tire of having such optimism at your side?"

"He has his uses, Kirk." Koloth turned his attention to Susie, who was standing almost behind Kirk, peeping out at the side. "She is a most effective secret weapon. Her value is not perceived at first sight."

"You might even call her a very adequate red herring," Kirk suggested, grinning at his own pun.
"I do not understand, Kirk."

"It is not necessary that you do, Ambassador." Kirk was suddenly all business. "Suffice it to say that Carney and his people will be dealt with. Starfleet is more adverse to attempted to murder on its ships than the Empire is."

"I would like to believe that the criminals will be treated with suitable harshness, but perhaps that is too much to ask."

"I'm afraid so, Ambassador," Kirk agreed. "We are again attempting to contact the <u>Devisor</u>.

Perhaps there is some phrase we could use that might make our task easier?" Kirk suggested.

Koloth shook his head. "Not that I know of, Captain. But perhaps this time you will be successful. If not, you can take us to our current destination."

"Certainly, Ambassador, after a slight detour to Starbase 11. It will be my pleasure to deliver you ... somewhere."

Later that evening, Kirk, Spock and McCoy sat in the captain's office.

"What I don't understand," McCoy was saying, "is how did Carney manage it all. There were so many little things that had to fall into place."

"Not all that many, Doctor," Spock replied. "Timing was the most important variable, and Carney was ready to wait until just the correct set of circumstances existed — a starship at Starbase 11, a not unusual occurance, and Klingon representatives waiting for a ship to take them home — a most unusual occurance. Carney admitted that he had waited years to put his plan into action."

"And it was quite a plan, Bones," Kirk observed. "Every time a starship was due in, he checked with his agent on Babel to see if there was a Klingon ambassador or two in the neighborhood. It wasn't too hard, as entertainers are almost invisible people. They're everywhere and no one thinks twice about it. Once the right set of circumstances presented itself — the <a href="Enterprise">Enterprise</a> at Starbase 11 and Koloth at Babel, Carney put the second part of the plan into operation.

"First, an agent slipped us the altered Library disc. This was more of a back-up for him in the event he couldn't get on board any other way. Next, his accomplice on Babel falsified the message to Koloth that the Devisor had been called away and that other transportation should be requested."

"I'd like to know how he did that," McCoy said.

"So would Command, but Carney isn't saying." Kirk had used every trick he knew to get Carney to tell him, but none had worked.

"Of course, the Enterprise was the closest starship," Kirk continued. "Carney figured rightly that a starship would be sent to transport the Klingons. Then the circus left directly for Lorona while we were on our way to Babel. Here's where he really took his chance. He had no way of knowing that I wouldn't just beam down the Klingons andkeep going, or that I might have just left after the meeting with Chen."

Again McCoy interrupted. "Not so much of a chance, if he knew the Enterprise at all. I would guess that he had a pretty good idea of the captains he might be dealing with and how they might react to Advocate Chen's blandishments."

"Maybe he did; we'll have to ask. In any event, if I hadn't met with Chen, Carney would have just tried again. He was an incredibly patient man. Those deaths he wanted to avenge happened years ago — his wife and children were among those who died.

"But I did meet the Advocate, and here's where Carney was just too clever. He said Starfleet owed him too much money. He had to make the sum large enough so that there was no way I could pay the amount, but he went too far."

"Indeed, Captain, Starfleet frugality is not well known outside the service. Command would never spend that much money on entertainment."

"Correct, Mr. Spock. The other thing that tipped it, of course, was when Susie pointed out that the same clown was on Lorona that had been at Starbase 11. There had to be a connection, and since Carney was so anxious to come on board I made it simple for him. The rest, as they say, is history."

Kirk took a swallow of his drink. This time he was buying. Spock had even accepted one. Alcohol had no effect on Vulcans, a waste in McCoy's eyes.

"Carney couldn't know, of course, that we would have our own stow-away who would tip us off on the IAS and eventually distract Carney enough so that the phaser could be knocked from his hand. Gentlemen," Kirk said, rising and holding up his glass for a toast, "To Susie — the Enterprise's own secret weapon.

Captain's Log, Stardate 4520.2. Ambassador Koloth and his aide have transferred to Devisor following contact with the Klingon vessel. We are returning to Starbase 11 where we will turn Carney and his colleagues over to the authorities.

Unfortunately, we will also have to return Susie. I know I speak for the entire crew when I say that we are not looking forward to that transfer.

Kirk was having dinner with Susie. They would reach Starbase 11 the next day and Kirk had not yet found the right time. As he watched, Susie pushed her vegetables from one side of the plate to the other, trying to make them disappear.

"Eat up, Susie, Vegetables are good for you."

"That's what Mr. Spock says," Susie said with disgust. "He likes them -- all of them."

"You don't have to like all of them, just some of them," Kirk encouraged.

Susie put one pea on her fork and put it into her mouth, chewing vigorously. Kirk wondered what she found to chew on for so long. This was the time; he couldn't put if off any longer.

"We arrive at Starbase 11 tomorrow, Susie. That's where you joined the ship."

"Are you going to leave me there, Uncle Daddy?" Susie asked in a small voice.

"Yes, Susie. A starship isn't the place for a little girl. You have to go to school and we just can't teach you all the things you'll need to know." Kirk knew the words to be lies as he spoke them. Among them, his crew could teach anyone all they needed to know.

"I don't want to leave, Uncle Daddy."

"Susie, often in life we have to do things other people say are for our own good and we can't see the truth of what they are saying. The only advice I can give you is that if someone you trust tells you to do something 'for your own good,' they are probably right. Not always, but most of the time." That certainly confuses things, Kirk told himself.

Susie thought about what Kirk said and then, with that directness that could be so disconcerting, she stated, "My Mommie and Daddy aren't coming back, are they? I heard some people talking at school," she admitted. Her voice trailed off and her face screwed up as tears formed in her eyes.

Kirk reached out a hand to cover hers. "No, Susie, they aren't."

"I thought you were my daddy come back to me when I first saw you. You have the same color shirt he has." Susie looked up at him and then added. "I suppose I'll have to call you Uncle Jim now."

Kirk smiled and shook his head. "I think Uncle Daddy is just fine as long as that's what you want."

She nodded and then hopped off her chair and rushed around the table to throw her arms around him. "You won't forget me, will you? I don't want you to forget me the way my real daddy did."

"I won't forget you, and I doubt very much that your father did." Kirk hugged her to him, her small arms winding around his neck. He realized that Susie was one reason man was out among the stars. Susie and alithe Susies on all the planets -- Human, Klingon, Vulcan, Tellarite, Romulan -- all the sentient beings of the galaxy. To make a better universe for all the Susies -- that was their mission. Their real mission.



Starbase 11 rapidly shrank in size as the Enterprise moved out of orbit and on to her next assignment. Kirk sat in the command chair, once more on Alpha shift. McCoy stood behind him and to the side, rocking back and forth a little on his heels. Spock stood on the other side, directly next to the captain. The attention of the bridge personnel was directed at the viewscreen. It was Uhura who asked the question on everyone's mind.

"What will happen to Susie now?"

It was McCoy who answered. "She had relatives on Earth. They'll send her there."

"She's never been on Earth," Sulu said to no one in particular. "She was born in space. That's her home."

"Well," McCoy volunteered, we get to Earth fairly often, so perhaps it's a good thing she'll be there. We can keep our collective eye on her."

Kirk smiled at the thought. Susie was going to have the largest family around -- 429 uncles and aunts -- there wasn't a crewmember who didn't think of himself or herself in that role. And of course, one Uncle Daddy.

"She is indeed a most unusual Human child," Spock acknowledged.

"Oh," McCoy asked," in what way?"

"She did not feel the need for unnecessary prying into personal lives -- something that most Humans consider an inalienable right. Unfortunately, living on Earth may change that."

"Did you consider," McCoy suggested, "that perhaps she didn't pry because she didn't want to know?" Spock raised one eyebrow in surprise. "No, Doctor, I did not consider that."

"Well, consider it now, Spock!"

Spock did so for the space of half a second. "I do not consider that possibility likely, Doctor. In all other aspects, Susie exhibited a quite highly developed curiosity. Therefore, it is unlikely that she exhibit no curiosity about other life forms. It is, therefore, her innate good breeding which prevented her from asking too many personal questions."

McCoy reacted as expected. "Are you implying that I have no breeding?"

"No, Doctor. You are implying that. I was speaking about Susie."

Kirk couldn't keep a straight face any longer, neither could the rest of the bridge crew. It felt good -- it felt good to be sitting on his bridge, sharing laughter with his crew. Kirk was content. At least for a little while. Until the next crisis came his way. Until the call of the unknown beckoned from beyond the next star.



# THE INCOMPLEAT PUZZLER

the more complex the mind, the greater the need for play.

what types of necreation does the crew or your vessel enjoy?

have I ever mentioned you play a very irritating game ...?

#### **XENOPHILIA**

B B I N D N D N I T 8 D 8 0 0 D A M J C I G V A J K 8 R T C 8 S 0 J W N I U I K I A K G 0 X R I S B 0 U Н U E 8 R R I I W G B H E K I M R 0 0 D U A M T 0 A I T 0 N T 0 D T E Z B Z N G R R I Z A G 0 T D N I I E C 8 X K N N A I T 0 E H K Z R C U A G 0 Q Y B A Q M Q U C R Q N S N U Q M E N I 0 R K T M M I X X 0 X R K R J A X D M X E I D E S U A N C J R W E C S 9 L C N N T X 0 B U 8 M Y U N I 8 R J A Z G R M T E C U T I Q F B G E I R G B D D S T M T R U Z I J N E G E J R R I **Z** . B Α Α D M W D E I J D N Α S Z S A Ε C N 0 X E E N J H X N D B B N Q N I R E N G X E S W U R X G G

The following words are hidden in the puzzle:

REGULAN BLOOD WORM **ANDOR I AN ARCTURIAN** RIGELLIAN **DELTAN** ROMULAN SAURIAN **EXCALBIAN** SLIME DEVIL **HORTA** TELLERITE HUMAN KLINGON THOL I AN TRIBBLE **MEDUSAN VULCAN ORGANIAN** ZETARIAN ORION

#### **CHEKOV'S VOYAGES**

Q X U D S В R T I Y C R 0 R E R U S Z M B A P Y Q G R G M J B N I G C I G 0 M 0 J A 0 N C A 0 E Z K T 8 A 0 A P I 1 1 G M D U D U S Y X R H N G R N R T Α I Z S 1 0 0 0 I В R N T D K H 6 0 J I Q J H B R T I K E C S N R W A I 0 R K D D H I Y В 0 T S Q J D I U 0 E T N E N D M D V X N E N R R U T U I В E E 0 S S G I B Z J I S T N K 0 X H I B U E X M Q I T D I R A B R T T K В M 0 В X G K 0 0 B T I H Z Q C P Z J D W S Q Q U T X Ε I J 0 T Q N 0 X Z K Q C P N G U X W

The following words are hidden in the puzzle:

APOLLO
BILLY CLAIBORNE
GAMMA HYDRA IV
GAMMA TRIANGULI VI
HARRY MUDD
HISTORY
IRINI GALLIULIN
LENINGRAD
MARA
MELKOTS

NAVIGATOR
OK CORRAL
PIOTR CHEKOV
POLLUX IV
PROVIDERS
TAMOON
THOLIANS
TRIBBLES
TRISKELION
VODKA AND KLINGONS

#### **HELMSMAN'S DELIGHT**

W J E W I Y P B I G D Z R C J F 0 1 T C Q 0 Z 0 Ε J В Ε H H B В X Y C S G Н T D P V M G В E S 0 U M Z I N E R H Y D U D N X X E U T U C I R T U C 8 E R U A C В D C B T Z B A C M K I E P Z 0 T F H D S P U S S G Α N Q S N I 0 X G R Y S Q K B S L M R S F E Y I Y N E E B S G V U I A W Z 0 D C S G U R G I D T K N H E H D S H M X J C X N U I R N 0 I P U Y T I S I R Ε W R A E E I E R Y Z S Q M R J T N I U R Y I I R 0 K D E T Y X E Q W C T M I F D R I H P B H Α E Q H R B G S R В E U V В T D E Y В Α 0 T R B A B T G C M S K W T U G F C 0 0 T 0 Н U 0 X I N E I T T ٧ U W W X N H Y D I B K R T K A E P U U E D W Α T 0 0 Y S G E J K T G Z N T S J R S В W T 0 U K T Α н S E 0 Q D

The following words are hidden in the puzzle:

LOSIRA **ARCHONS BOTANY** PYRIS VII CHEKOV RICHELIEU **ROMULANS CORBOMITE FENCING SAMURA I** FIREARMS **SCRUTABLE GERTRUDE** SECURITY HARRY MUDD SQUIRE OF GOTHOS HELMSMAN SYLVIA HOBBIES THE BODY

# DR. MCCOY'S DISEASE OF THE WEEK

0 B Z S Y I S C 0 0 K I G 8 Z I S B R 1 C H S T B Z J K E T X X 8 0 I Z C 8 I 0 R Z 0 R H S U N E I 0 Z E 8 C R X X 0 T 0 S 8 E M Q S I 8 0 R U I S Z I X S N S R Q I C A G X D S D D G I C T 1 Z C B I K N C 0 0 I S N T I B N A M P C C H E Н G 8 S S G S I K B S N M C 0 Ε N N 0 E C Q G E G I D S Z M A K Q S G X T 0 J E R A I R I Α E B Q G M В B E S S K 0 E S В 8 R Н D 8 0 S D S

There are 20 words from the good doctor's vocubulary hidden here -- see the answer page if you need help

#### **SCOTTY'S ADVENTURES**

Н B 8 R E E E B I T 0 K Z I W 8 C E 0 T D Z K T Y R M I B S S D I E E G 8 0 R N 0 W E T E B I Ε Z T R 8 8 J T I C E N N 8 C J T I S N E I 0 R M I R K N I T T 8 B I X H В B X I C 8 D C I 8 G T N B H T Z 0 F E M X E R N T U C X C U C G S H S X Q B T 8 Z В 8 C C Z W I S B K E B W T I 8 0 E E H X Z

There are 20 words from the Chief Engineer's log hidden here --see the answer page if you need help

#### STAR TREK SPEAKS --

#### CRYPTOGRAMS by Rosemarie Eierman

- 1. OX BJJ GBKTPKN -- GBM AQ KQRQF UPKN IWBSQ IX RBIO, WJBKQOI IX SXJN, YQBFO BKN GPKN IX QGWOM OYBO AQ SBKKXO UPJJ OYQG APOY JXRQ BKN ABFGOY. -- NBEEQF XU OYQ GPKN
- 2. JK COSK GSXIU OVV VTGK GDAWZ TI YCK NOVOFE OAK ROHOPVK DG ZXHKATDA UKSKVDHWKIY. OVV EDXA HKDHVK WXZY VKOAI PKGDAK EDX ROI AKORC GDA YCK ZYOAZ. -- YCK NOWKZYKAZ DG YATZMKVTDI
- 3. PIX DUEX KUDBHXW PIX DORT, PIX QEXNPXE PIX RXXT VUE PIX AODBHOKOPZ UV BHNZ. -- AIUEX HXNYX
- 4. EDSQ P TDYOA YN LPKXDL ... YL'N RUBXUPFFSA EYLD NYFROS YQNLUKTLYBQN -- PQA PL NBFS RBYQL, YI YLN FYQA ASCSOBRN RUBRSUOH, YL SJTSSAN LDS NKF BI EDPL YL EPN LPKXDL. LDYQZN YQASRSQASQLOH. -- LDS KOLYFPLS TBFRKLSU
- 5. JTLABF RHTFL'M DHOG HL SL SFFTWYPC PALT YSFAF. CHB XSL'M FAWZPC FSC, "MHRSC A DAPP YT YOAPPASLM."
  -- MYT BPMAWSMT XHWZBMTO
- 6. IGWHW DYSWU IY XFF HXDWU XE AFIV SXIW DHVUVU LGVDG ZYA GXOW ZWI IY RXDW .... YEW JXZ YAH SVEJU NWDXSW UY BYLWHRAF LW JXHWJ IGVEQ YR YAHUWFOWU XU MYJU. --- HWIAHE IY IYSYHHYL
- 7. "QJ'M GOCU JY NSTQSAS JGOJ MYVSJGQIW FGQKG QM ISQJGSC MSSI IYC ZSTJ KOI UY MY VLKG GOCV." "JGOJ'M JCLS. NLJ OI QUSO KOI'J NS MSSI YC ZSTJ. OIU JGOJ'M FGOJ DSEJ JGS JCYWTHJSM QI JGS VQIUM OTT JGSMS KSIJLCQSM. O VQMJODSI QUSO." -- JGS KTYLU VQIUSCM
- 8. XLCBKJRK IFJAJNW KFBBMX XLCBKJRK IYFJNJRH.

  JHXLTTJDJBHN TIDNX IAGIWX JHOJNB MIHZBK. -- XCIDB XBBM
- 9. BQMDCYZ DGPNM DC GFLAAGYLDG. -- DBG MLSLAG JOYDLQP
  GSGP BQMDCYQLPM VLQT DC TGLYP VYCE BQMDCYZ -- DBGZ YGWGLD DGB MLEG EQMDLIGM. -- WLDDGYPM CV VCYHG
- 10. ...SBI LCIDJQTVIR LIALUI KIIU YFAJS IYVB ASBIC QTRYLLIYC NBIO SBIE XIS SA GOAN IYVB ASBIC. -- IUYYO AK SCAETJR
- 11. JYKS BTYTOWK DLUT SDTXP ILKXK XQ ALHSK. -- LOW SDT HDXGWPTQ KDLGG GTLW
- 12. HLWB HBCZN LSV ILNVX DW CSMCZ. -- CZV GLB CD VXVW EN CSMCZ WDC CSMCZ QDS LPP? -- QDS CZV GDSPX EN ZDPPDG ....
- 13. FPZYZ BN HG QYXZY QW FPBGIN BG FPBN JGBSZYNZ. -- DPQ LQJYGN WQY HXQGHBN?
  FBLZ BN WRJBX ... RBAZ H YBSZY DBFP TJYYZGFN, ZXXBZN, UHTADHNP. -- FPZ TBFK QG FPZ ZXIZ QW WQYZSZY
- 14. ZTYOMQY KLFFXMI MK POMTPF YOFLF TR GM PLFYYTHTYJ. ZTYOMQY PLFYYTHTYJ YOFLF TR GM UTKF. -- YOF LFYOLG MK YOF VLPOMGR
  - POVGVF TR YOF FRRGFYTVU WLMPFRR MK VUU FCTRYFGPF. -- UFY YOVY EF JMQL UVRY EVYYUFKTFUY
- 15. Z DENNDH PMBBHIEVW EP WGGF BGI NJH PGMD. -- NJH YGIAGSENH SZYHMLHI
  EB NJHIH ZIH PHDB-SZFH TMIWZNGIEHP, NJHV XH ZDD JZLH NG DELH EV NJHS. -- NJEP PEFH GB TZIZFEPH
  TISTZIH BGI NGSGIGGX -- WHN IHZFU. -- NJH YENU GV NJH HFWH GB BGIHLHI
- 16. XZFYQOO CZO YN HBWHNOQ. NW WQZONY. EBR AR XZL CZKQ Z VNZD. -- RCQ ZDRQWYZRAKQ PZURNW SCQEQ REQWQ'O YN QXNRANY, RCQWQ'O YN XNRAKQ PNW KANDQYUQ. -- FZVVQW NP RCQ XAYF
- 17. TABMOB JX QCUYBWBP YC YVO KWSX CR TWU WUM ECM. -- YVO AKYJTWYO QCTHAYOB
  UC CUO TWP ZJKK W TWU. UCY RCB WUP HABHCXO. JY QWUUCY IO QCUMCUOM. -- XHCQZ'X IBWJU
  ZJKKJUE JX XYAHJM: AXOKOXX! -- W HBJLWYO KJYYKO SWB
  LJCKOUQO JU BOWKJYP JX FAJYO MJRROBOUY RBCT YVOCBP. -- YVO QKCAM TJUMOBX
- 18. ORYSRXVSEEAJ, LSQAV QKEE XOVR ACAR PNKRXP KRXS PNCNHAP. NRJ QA YNR NEE DA YSORXAJ SR XS EKCA JSQR XS SOV ESQAPX KTLOEPAP. -- LENXS'P PXALYMKEJVAR

- 19. ZH B TBS RBK B FRZIK ORP'K CPSL BSAZ-JPFZBI, YZIILK NLQRBNJ, RL'K JAZII ALSK AP NQPALFA ARBA FRZIL. -- ARL VIAZTBAL FPTNVALQ
  - B HBARLQ KPLJS'A KLJAQPX RZJ FRZIKQLS. -- ORP TPVQSJ HPQ BKPSBZJ? XPVAR KPLSJ'A LWFVJL LGLQXARZSC. -- AVQSBUPVA ZSAQVKLQ
- 20. XJFKH X FPQK, DGR QXD JPCN FLXF LXZPCE PW CGF WG OBKXWPCE X FLPCE, SJFKH XBB, XW UXCFPCE. PF PW CGF BGEPAXB, TRF PF PW GJFKC FHRK. --- XQGY FPQK
- 21. SFAEJPA GJVVJSROH, ROFV BLMMJA HZORLK.
  ROFV KJRH HRRU AJ CLFMALFM ZJSRO XD HPZZORHHFMW AER AOPAE.
  JO XD CFJVRLKFMW AERFMMJBRMA. LMK AER BEFVKORM HELVV VRLK
- 22. JB QPRNO EKKA BDVB KUJN TKBTKVBE QDKX ZPTMJGNF MPXBTPXBKO. -- BDK EVUVYK MRTBVJX FKE, JB JE QTJBBKX. YPPO EDVNN VNQVFE CKEBTPF KUJN. -- BDK PAKYV YNPTF XP PXK MVX YRVTVXBKK BDK VMBJPXE PZ VXPBDKT. -- OVF PZ BDK OPUK

[Solutions on page 112]



#### WORD SEARCH CLUES

DOCTOR MCCOY'S DISEASE OF THE WEEK

KYZZYBY LENEK

INDICESTION

AIRSTERIA

HEVDYCHE

FATIGUE

**PEING** 

DIZZINEZZ

COMMON COLD

CHORIOCYTOSIS

CHORIOMENINGITIS

MECROTIC TISSUE

SELZURES

STRESS

STR

#### SCOTTY'S ADVENTURES

IMPERIAL FLEET TRIBBLES DOUM YARAH TRELANE CARBAGE SCOW **TRANSMUTER ENTERPRISE** II SURUAT ENCINEERING YONARB NAIRUAS CONCRETE GALOSHES OK CORRAL CLOAKING DEVICE **GAMON** CLAYMORE MIRA ROMAINE BILLY CLANTON KELVANS VEGELIAN LAWS INTERMIX CHAMBER

# **CRYPTOGRAM SOLUTIONS**

```
No one can guarantee the actions of another. -- DAY OF THE DOVE
                           Yes, it is written. Good shall always destroy evil. -- THE OMEGA GLORY
                 it would seem that evil retreats when forcibly confronted. -- THE SAVAGE CURTAIN
                                   Or by misleading the innocent. -- AND THE CHILDREN SHALL LEAD
                                        Evil does seek to maintain power by suppressing the truth.
                                                           Without tollowers, evil cannot spread.
                                                       not logical, but is is often true. -- AMOK TIME
  si +1 .gnitnsw as .lls .ening a thing to not so pleasing a thing, after all, as wanting.
                                              Youth doesn't excuse everything. TURNABOUT INTRUDER
                                  A father doesn't destroy his children. -- MHO MOURNS FOR ADONAIS
                                                                              -- THE ULTIMATE COMPUTER
19. It a man had a child who'd gone anti-social, killed perhaps, he'd still tend to protect that child.
                                                        to our lowest impulses. -- PLATO'S STEPCHILDREN
18. Uncontrolled, power will turn even saints into savages. And we can all be counted on to live down
                          Violence in reality is quite different from theory. -- THE CLOUD MINDERS
                                               Killing is stupid; useless! -- A PRIVATE LITTLE WAR
             No one may kill a man. Not for any purpose. It cannot be condoned. -- SPOCK'S BRAIN
                           Murder is contrary to the laws of man and god. -- THE ULTIMATE COMPUTER
                    Where there's no emotion, there's no motive for violence. -- DAGGER OF THE MIND
            Madness has no purpose. Or reason. But it may have a goal. -- THE ALTERNATIVE FACTOR
     if there are self-made purgatories, then we all have to live in them. -- THIS SIDE OF PARADISE
                                 A little suffering is good for the soul. -- THE CORBOMITE MANEUVER
             Change is the essential process of all existence. -- LET THAT BE YOUR LAST BATTLEFIELD
                                                                                  RETURN OF THE ARCHONS
     Without freedom of choice there is no creativity. Without creativity there is no life. -- THE
 Time is fluid ... like a river with currents, eddies, backwash. -- THE CITY ON THE EDGE OF FOREVER
                           There is an order of things in this universe. -- WHO MOURNS FOR ADONAIS
                                       .... WOLLOW 31 THE WORLD IS HOLLOW ...
                                                  Many myths are based on truth. -- THE WAY TO EDEN
                                                                                                    .21
                             Most legends have their basis in tacts. -- AND THE CHILDREN SHALL LEAD
  The prejudices people feel about each other disappear when they get to know each other. -- ELAAN
   Even historians tall to learn from history -- they repeat the same mistakes. -- PATTERNS OF FORCE
                                                  History tends to exaggerate. -- THE SAVAGE CURTAIN
                                             Insufficient facts always invite danger. -- SPACE SEED
                                                          Superior ability breeds superior ambition.
                                            all these centuries. A mistaken idea. -- THE CLOUD MINDERS
    That's true. But an idea can't be seen or felt. And that's what kept the Troglytes in the mines
              7. It's hard to believe that something which is neither seen nor felt can do so much harm.
                                  so powerful we dared think of ourselves as gods. -- RETURN TO TOMORROW
  There comes to all races an ultimate crisis which you have yet to tace ... One day our minds became
                                                                                HE ULTIMATE COMPUTER
  5. Genius doesn't work on an assembly line basis. You can't simply say, "Today i will be brilliant."
                                                                                                COMPUTER
  mind develops properly, it exceeds the sum of what it was taught, thinks independently. -- THE ULTIMATE
     When a child is taught ... it's programmed with simple instructions -- and at some point, it its
           The more complex the mind, the greater the need for the simplicity of play. -- SHORE LEAVE
We have found all life forms in the galaxy are capable of superior development. -- DAGGER OF THE MIND
                                         We cannot fill them with love and warmth. -- DAGGER OF THE MIND
     1. To all mankind -- may we never find space so vast, planets so cold, heart and mind so empty that
```

# STRICTLY FOR LAUGHS

Logic and practical information do not seem to apply here.

Fascinating is a word I use for the unexpected.

These experiences were intended to amuse you.

Humor ... it is a difficult concept ... it is not logical.

#### What's In a Name?

#### by Moria Washburn

[A Vulcan by Any Other Name Would Smell]

AUTHOR'S NOTE to this rather peculiar story:

Set in the time period directly following Vulcan's entrance into the Federation, this story grew out of the 'Vulcan tradition' of "T" and "S" name prefixes, and Trek writers' grim search for impressive sounding names of the ilk of Surak, Sarek, and T'Pring."

The four young Vulcan men walked sedately across the Academy courtyard toward the pedestrian pathway which led through the parklands and into the city proper. Having just left their class in Advanced Theory of Partial Differential Equations, they were still discussing the practical applications of inter-dimensional D.E.'s when they were interrupted by feminine giggling. Without breaking stride, all four observed a Human couple standing just off the courtyard, holding hands and speaking in muffled tones. But not too muffled for Vulcan ears.

"Appalling," commented Suk, as he closed off his attention to them. "If they wish to discuss such matters, they should be more discrete."

Sar raised a thoughtful eyebrow. "I believe," he said slowly, "that by Human standards, they are being discrete. They are standing out of the open and have lowered their voices to what they consider to be a private level of speech. They simply have not yet learned to take into consideration that we Vulcans possess such acute ... hearing."

Suk looked unconvinced. "They are on our planet. They should have the good manners to learn to conform to our standards," he said darkly.

"That is clearly an ethnocentric attitude, Suk, and unworthy of an enlightened Vulcan," interjected Sandra, chidingly. "You have shown marked intolerance towards our Terran guests ever since their rather ... unrestrained ... reaction to the introduction of you and your bondmate to them."

"They <u>laughed!</u>" Suk almost snapped. "I see nothing humorous about 'I would like you to meet Suk and his betrothed, T'it.'"

Spud, who as usual had wandered almost off the edge of the pathway, looked across at Suk brightly. "You don't understand Terran 'slang'. They laughed because ... "

"It is not important," said Sandra with a withering glare at Spud, "why they laughed. It is neither logical nor an intelligent use of time for Vulcans to discuss why Humans laugh." Spud averted his eyes from Sandra's disapproving gaze. Seeing that Spud looked properly squelched, Sandra continued, "The fact is that Humans not only laugh, but engage in all manner of illogical activities. Now that Vulcan is a member of the Federation, we must learn to accept, or at least overlook, the idiosyncracies of other species. We have no right to impose our values on other sentient beings," Sandra concluded nobly.

"Sentient is a matter of view," muttered Suk under his breath. "Tell me, Sandra," he continued more audibly, "despite your magnanimous attitude, are you not somewhat annoyed by that Terran female who answers every time your name is spoken within her hearing?" Suk watched closely for any reaction in Sandra's face.

"Annoyance is an emotion, Suk," said Sandra superciliously. "I must admit that the coincidence of names has resulted in some rather ... awkward incidents. However, the problem has been neatly solved by the young woman herself. She is now using the name 'Sandy'. Quite a logical solution, especially for a Human, wouldn't you agree, Suk," said sandra with an imperious lift of his eyebrow.

Suk clenched his teeth slightly and didn't answer.

Sar stepped diplomatically into the heavy silence between the two. "There have been a number of curious incidents arising from coincidences in Terran and Vulcan names at the Academy. For example: T'ina, Skot's sister, received a missive from Scott Anderson intended for his, uhm, girifriend ina Evans. It was written in Terran Basic, which T'ina couldn't read, so she contacted her brother. He, not yet realizing exactly what the error was, had someone translate the note. Although I do not know precisely what was in it (Skot would not repeat it), I understand that it is very fortunate that T'ina does not read Terran Basic, as the note contained language and references to which no young woman — no young Vulcan woman — should be exposed." Sar shook his head slightly in restrained amusement.

"I know what was in the note;  $\underline{l}$  was the translator," interjected Spud from the sidelines, "it said ... "

"Nothing of value to us," finished Sandra firmly. "I do not propose to listen to your gossip, Spud, and it is unworthy of you as a Vulcan to indulge in it. However," he continued with a lofty, cold gaze in Spud's direction, "I would like to know from where you have been learning your Terran Basic. You seem to be quite proficient, if not wise, in its use."

Spud feeling somewhat intimidated by Sandra's sharp appraisal, had again wandered too close to the border of the path and had caught his sleeve in a lotarian thron bush. While attempting to extricate himself he succeeded in impaling his thumb on one of the long, sharp thorns. He frowned very faintly, regarding his perforated thumb, and moved a safe distance away from the bush.

"Carl ... " he began, closing his fist around the thumb to staunch the bleeding.

"Don't be crude, Spud," said Sandra severely, "you are well past the age of having any excuse to use such unseemly language, especially for so minor an injury," he lectured a bewildered Spud.

"I believe that Spud was trying to tell you that <u>Carl Simmons</u> has been teaching him to speak Terran Basic," interceded Sar, receiving a covertly grateful look from Spud.

"Indeed?" said Sandra, "I am afraid I do not know this ... Carl Simmons. Is he in the department of Physical and Engineering Sciences?"

"No, he is here to study the Vulcan language. He is a linguist," answered Sar.

"Indeed. That explains why I have not met him. Of course, linguistics is a science ... of sorts, and therefore of some value." Sandra threw a rather doubtful look towards Spud.

Spud flushed slightly, gripped his thumb tighter, and eyed Sandra back steadily. Sandra's condescending look changed to one of faint surprise as Spud continued to hold his gaze.

By now the young Vulcans had traversed the length of the parkland path and were entering the city proper. As they left the pathway, Suk started slightly and slowed.

"How?" he began, sounded puzzled.

"What?" said Sandra rather shortly, breaking his gaze with Spud to glare disapprovingly in Suk's direction. "Single word utterances are not only imprecise, but also ... "

"Is that not the same young woman we saw just off the Academy courtyard?" continued Suk, cutting across Sandra's speech. "How could she have traversed the parklands so quickly? And she is with a different male." Suk sounded scandalized.

All four Vulcans surreptitiously eyed the Human couple.

"'Twins'," said Spud suddenly.

"Where?" asked Sandra, chagrin changing to anticipation as he glanced around quickly and smoothed down his bangs self-consciously. "I have been wishing to speak to her about ... "

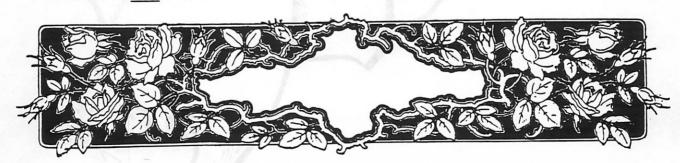
"No, Sandra, not T'winz; 'TWINS'," elaborated Sar hurriedly. "It is the Terran analogue of makorv -- two children brought forth at a single birth. The young woman here is the makorv -- the 'twin' -- of the one we saw nearer the Academy."

"The 'Identical Twin'," added Spud helpfully, "Karen and ... "

Sandra whirled on Spud. "I am growing very weary of your constant obscenities! You should restrain yourself from using such abominable language ... especially in public where women and children might overhear you! And as for your fascination with Terran terminology, you should have more pride as a Vulcan than to casually contaminate your vocabulary with stray words picked up from aliens! Sandra lifted his chin ostentatiously and stalked away, leaving two shocked Vulcans behind.

Spud tried to look innocently surprised, and not visibly amused as his two companions peered after Sandra in consternation. "Well!" he said with cheerful satisfaction, "Sandra finally fell off of his 'soapbox'."

"Fell off of WHOM?!" gasped Suk.



# **Count Dratula**

by Laurel Ridener and Lynn Syck



Captain Kirk lay sprawled face down across his bunk, sleeping the sleep of the innocent. His broad bare back rose and fell in a slow, easy rhythm, and hair tousled unnoticed across his forehead. An air of satisfaction pervaded the cabin, and a small, shy smile touched his lips.

The cabin was dark and cool, lit only by the dim tell-tales from the quiet computer terminals. His tunic and boots lay in a neglected pile where they'd fallen.

At the foot of kirk's bunk a shimmer began, the merest hint of a swirling, crimson luminescence that slowly brightened into a pillar of silent, churning scarlet. There in the dim cabin the pillar solidified into an apparition straight from the pits of Hell. Only the crimson, darting eyes, lustfully caressing the smooth, rippling muscles lent life to the pillar wrapped in a midnight cloak. The hungry gaze stopped at the gentle, steady pulsing in the strong, tanned neck.

It smiled; long white fangs glistened dully in the muted cabin lights. Slowly unfolding arms allowed the cloak to fall open, revealing a thick, muscular body clad in black.

Waiting a moment longer, the spectre moved toward the defenseless captain, anticipation glowing in its feral eyes.

Kirk hadn't stirred, totally unaware of the deadly intruder in his cabin, the deadly danger to his soul.

The dark being slowly raised its hands, reaching for that grasp that would seal Kirk's fate even as it marveled at the sheer physical perfection of the Human, took two steps --

And tripped over Kirk's boots, landing squarely on top of the sleeping captain.

"Yipes!" it squeaked, entangled in the heavy cloak.

Instinctively Kirk rolled over, striking out blindly, his fist connecting solidly with the intruder's jaw.

"Yipes!" it squeaked a second time, and promptly disappeared.

"What in the --!" Kirk shouted, clutching at empty air as he grabbed for the non-existent intruder.

He clambored back to sit on the edge of his bunk, pulse pounding in his ears, heart racing, his breath caught painfully in his lungs. He scanned the quarters quickly, finally satisfied that the intruder was gone. As the surge of adrenalin subsided, he took several deep, calming breaths, wondering if it had all been a dream.

But he knew damn well it wasn't any dream: there had been an intruder in his quarters, an <u>undetected</u> intruder, and he was furious! Not taking his eyes from the place where the intruder had disappeared, he reached behind him for the intercom, connecting prematurely with the unit and roughly jamming his fingers back into his knuckles.

"What-in-the-hell" he swore loudly, putting the injured hand to his mouth, "is going on around here!" he finished around the knuckles.

He cautiously reached for the com a second time, this time activating the unit.

"Spock! Bones! Get in here!" he bellowed in a voice that required no com system to be heard.



In a matter of moments Spock and McCoy arrived, charging into Kirk's quarters. Spock held his phaser set to kill, and McCoy held his medscanner in much the same manner.

"Captain -- !"

"Jim -- ?"

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"-- are you all right?" they finished in unison.

"Yes," came Kirk's muffled reply as he pulled on a fresh tunic.

McCoy hurried over to him, quickly working with his medscanner, studying the readings. He shrugged his shoulders slightly. "You're still a couple of pounds overweight, but other than that, I don't find anything wrong."

Spock watched his captain intently, alert for any signs of difficulty, assuming a terrible struggle must have taken place for Kirk's tunic and boots to be scattered about as they were.

"Stop staring at me and sit down!" Kirk ordered, not prepared to deal with any flippancy. "I'm all right, but there was in intruder in my quarters, and I want to know how it managed to remain undiscovered, and why!"

Spock and McCoy exchanged glances. "Perhaps if you would tell us about the intruder ... " Spock

prompted, sitting in the chair next to the desk.

Kirk told the story as quickly as possible, pacing his cabin restlessly, unable to remain still for very long.

Spock stared at the ceiling; McCoy stared at Kirk.

"You saw a what, and it was going to do what?" McCoy asked, barely suppressing a giggle.

Kirk wasn't laughing. "Spock?" he asked.

Spock finally met his captain's eyes, only to look away again, his emotions in a turmoil. "There was no intruder alert, Jim," he said quietly, "because there was no intruder."

"Like hell!" Kirk protested.

"Captain ... Spock began, hesitating at the iron, don't-you-dare-say-a-word look in his eyes.

Kirk paced to the end of the room, paused a moment, turned and paced back to McCoy and Spock, his abrows knitted in concentration.

He looked from McCoy to Spock. "Then it was somebody who is already aboard."

McCoy's eyes were downcast, and Spock seemed unable to meet Kirk's gaze.

Kirk ran his fingers raggedly through his hair. Suddenly he froze, as the first familiar piece of the puzzle shifted and slipped into place. "Wait a minute!" I know who it is!" he said, relief flooding his voice. "I just met him last week. Dratt, Ensign Wilbur Dratt! I'd know that squeal anywhere!" he finished triumphantly.

He stood before Spock and McCoy, hands on his hips, silently daring either of them to argue. Neither did, of course.

McCoy rose to stand beside Kirk, placing a placating hand on his shoulder.

He brushed it away. "Dratt programs the food synthesizers, doesn't he?" Kirk asked, looking insufferably smug as the second piece of the puzzle locked into position.

"Yeah ... so?" McCoy asked.

"What've we had for dinner lately, Doctor?"

Spock answered before McCoy could, a touch of green about his cheeks, after swallowing back a wave of nausea. "Blood pudding. Blood rare steaks. Cannibal sandwiches ...." He couldn't finish, squeezing his eyes tightly shut against the rising thickness in his throat.

"Omigod," Bones said meekly, sitting down on Kirk's bunk, shaking his head. "He's such a <u>nice</u> young man. Why, just the other day he was in Sickbay —"

"For what?" Kirk demanded smoothly.

McCoy looked absolutely stunned. "Anemia?" he finished sheepishly.

"Bones ... " Kirk said, unable to hide the scolding tone in his voice.

McCoy rose from the bunk, anger flashing from his ice-blue eyes. "Well, how was I supposed to know? He's such a nice, fresh young ...."

His words trailed off as Kirk stopped him with a look that could frost a nova. "You might have," he began in a barely controlled whisper, "put two and two together!"

"Dammit, Jim!" McCoy snapped, "I'm a doctor, not a mathematician!"

Until this point Spock had remained silent; now he interrupted politely with, "Rather than an exchange of accusations, would it not be advisable, Captain, to capture our 'intruder' and hold him for questioning? Perhaps there's a perfectly logical explanation for his actions."

Both McCoy and Kirk stared at the Stoic Vulcan, now in complete control of his emotions, as well as his stomach.

No one said a word.

Kirk walked to his desk and opened a channel. "Security! I want every available man to report to the enlisted quarters in all sections ...."



Several hours later, Spock, Kirk, and McCoy were all gathered in Sickbay, nervously awaiting the outcome of the search.

What if they didn't find him"

What if they did?

Kirk sat in the chair opposite McCoy, Spock standing behind him. McCoy sat behind his desk.

"Well, logically, he's got to be here," McCoy said, rocking his chair back and forth.

Spock shot him a withering look, but refused to rise to the bait.

"I won't hurt him," Kirk said through clenched teeth. "I just want to know what he wants from us. Other than the obvious. Maybe we can help him ... or something."

There was an odd quality in Kirk's voice that McCoy just didn't like.

"Jim -- " he cautioned, but Kirk silenced him with a firm shake of his head.

"Bones, bear with me a moment. He's been here — how long, a month? — and obviously that junk he's been programming in the food synthesizers hasn't satisfied his — "

- " -- appetites -- " supplied McCoy.
- " -- appetites," Kirk continued, "and we all know there are no live animals on board. What's he been using for food all this time?"

McCoy swallowed hard, and Spock closed his eyes tight yet again, beginning to dread every mention of the food synthesizers.

Neither first officer nor doctor could answer Kirk.

Although Kirk remained calm to all outward appearances, inside he was in a turmoil of frustration. Mentally, he furiously sifted through all the tidbits of Old Earth legends and lore that he retained from his childhood, plus a few he'd picked up along the way in less savory parts of the galaxy he'd visited.

Suddenly, the third piece of the puzzle slipped into place.

"Omigod," he groaned, looking across at Bones, up to Spock.

"Well?" McCoy prodded.

Kirk hesitated, not sure how to begin. "Haven't either of you noticed the female crewmembers, lately? Uhura? ... Chapel? ... Rand?"

McCOy looked at Kirk. "What for, Jim? They seem perfectly relaxed and happy to me. Always smil-

"Precisely, Doctor -- smiling," added Spock.

In McCoy's mind's eye, he observed the ladies in question, replaying the last time he had seen each — relaxed, satisfied, smiling those cute little half-smiles — satisfied? half-smiles? Chapel and Uhura?

"Oh, no," McCoy said. "And they haven't said a word!"

"Exactly," Kirk interrupted, a knowing look in his eyes.

"And if we do anything to him -- " began McCoy.

"-- we'll have half the crew on this ship to deal with," finished Kirk.

At that moment, Ensign Dratt burst into Sickbay, not noticing the captain and first officer.
"Doctor McCoy! You've just got to help -- " he began, and then he caught sight of Kirk and Spock.

"Yipes!" he squeaked, and promptly disappeared.

"That boy's gonna have to quit doing that before he hurts himself," McCoy muttered, mostly to himself.

"Captain," Spock began, his voice distant. "I believe I have a psychic 'fix' on him. Perhaps if I were to talk to him, I could convince him of his relative safety, and bring him here. I still maintain we could help him, thereby eliminating any further threat and subsequently retaining the services of a valuable crewmember."

Kirk looked up at his first officer, understanding fully the discomfort he was experiencing at the mental touch of such an alien mind.

"Thank you, Spock," he said softiy. "Go to him, if you can find him. Tell him we mean him no harm .. and just want to help. He's entitled to his place in the universe, just as we are." Kirk paused a moment, then almost as an afterthought added wistfully, "Maybe then he'll fix those synthesizers."

Spock felt a most un-Vulcan sense of gratitude and affection for his understanding captain. "I shall return as soon as possible, and with the ensign."

Spock had turned to leave when Kirk's worried voice stopped him. "Spock ... be careful."



Several hours later, Kirk and McCoy still waited. The ship was again on night status, and nothing had been heard from Spock. Kirk was growing frantic.

He felt certain Spock could hold his own in any conflict, and yet he'd been gone far too long. Something terrible must have happened.

Kirk rose from his chair, faced McCoy. "Call Security," he said in a grim voice, "have them initiate a Phase One search. I'm going after them."

McCoy only nodded, aware of Kirk's worry for his friend.

Before either could act, they heard Spock's low melodious voice and Dratt's high, squeaky laughter in the corridor. Kirk and McCoy exchanged irritated glances.

"... and thank you for the program jamming demonstration, Ensign; it was highly educational. It would be very wise to put your research notes on permanent record and enter them in the Federation

archives. Innovations in programming such as yours are invaluable, both as tools of science and as potential weapons of defense. Your work is incomparable."

"Thank you!" Dratt beamed.

He froze, however, when he faces his captain and doctor. He turned panic-stricken eyes to Spock, seekign support.

"They will not hurt you, Ensign; they merely wish to ask questions."

Kirk returned to his chair by McCoy's desk, casting a questioning look at the doctor.

McCoy only raised his eyebrows in a typical this-is-your-baby expression, and remained silent, folding his hands in his lap.

Kirk sighed deeply. "All right, Dratt, from the top. Tell me who and what your are, and tell me how to keep you on this ship without sacrificing the physical and ... a ... emotional? ... safety of my crew."

It was not a request.



Several weeks later, Kirk, McCoy, and Spock were again gathered in McCoy's office.

Nurse Chapel was going back and forth between Sickbay and Stores, replenishing their current inventory of supplies.

Dratt was off in a corner, having lunch while he updated some diagnostic programming for Dr. McCoy.

Chapel had just left McCoy's office, heading in Dratt's general direction, when the senior officers heard her give one blood-curdling scream.

Then silence.

They ran into Sickbay to see Ensign Dratt standing over the prostrate Chapel, deep crimson oozing down his chin.

Spock closed his eyes tightly, McCoy knelt by Chapel, and Kirk moved like a madman on Ensign Dratt.

"Beets! Pickled beets!" the terrified ensign screamed, holding up the dish and spoon as the distance between he and his furious captain lessened.

But it was loo late to stop Kirk's headlong charge into the hapless Dratt.

"Yipes!" he squeaked, and promptly disappeared, dish and spoon clattering to the floor.

Kirk skidded to a stop.

Spock opened his eyes.

McCoy shut his. "Oh, damn," he moaned, "here we go again."



## **An Attirely New Day**

#### by Rosemarie Eierman

[In a nearby alternate universe, of course]

The sound of the door buzzer interrupted the struggle Admiral James T. Kirk was having with the paperwork. He grumbled in frustration, not really needing another distraction; but then, the papers and tapes were already winning their battle to remain on his desk unread. "Come."

"Where shall I put these, sir?" called a young crewman.

"What are they, er ... Ensign?" Kirk squinted a bit, trying to see into the darker section of his quarters on the Enterprise.

"Your new uniforms, Admiral."

"New uniforms? What new uniforms? I didn't order any uniforms." Kirk realized he was overreacting as, after all these years in Starfleet, he was still wont to do whenever he felt harassed. Maybe he did need a break. Kirk motioned the young man into the room.

Miller Baysden took a deep breath and a better grip on the uniforms. The memo had been received fully two weeks ago, some six days into the training mission in which the Enterprise was currently engaged. This third uniform change in ten years had been the biggest topic of conversation for most of those same two weeks. Did everyone know except the admiral? But if the supply chief received the orders, the admiral ...

The condition of Kirk's desk registered in Baysden's mind. The admiral's copy of the orders must be buried somewhere near the bottom. "Ah, they're the new designs issued by Starfleet,sir. Two weeks ago." He looked meaningfully at the pile of tapes. He was also wondering why Kirk had not heard any of the rumors that had to have been circulating around Headquarters well before the Enterprise was notified, but said nothing.

Kirk chuckled. "So you think my desk needs a cleaning, huh? Obviously you are correct, but you'll get farther in Starfleet if you don't bring the lapses of your superior to his attention. What color is that?"

"Rust, sir."

Kirk groaned. He didn't care to think about all the "rusty" jokes this would cause. "Well, let's see HQ's latest masterpiece of make-work."

If the admiral didn't like the color very much, he liked the design less. It was far too military. He frowned, wondering just what was going on in the minds of those bureaucrats, forgetting that he himself was again one of them. He had often called himself a military man, but nevertheless he considered Starfleet's primary functions to be scientific and diplomatic. These uniforms displayed the gradually changing mood at Headquarters all too clearly.

"Nazi by Dior, sir," Baysden volunteered.

"What did you say?"

"Nazi by Dior. That's how everyone is describing them" Seeing that the admiral was still puzzled, he added, "The Nazi's were ... "

"I know who the Nazi's were," Kirk snapped, remembering all too well some of that kind of person from his experiences on a planet called Ekos. "Who's Dior?"

"Dior was a fashion design house in Paris on earth during the nineteenth through twenty-first centuries. They were very influential — or so the textbooks say."

Textbooks/ Kirk thought. The people in Supply learn the damndest things in school. Aloud he said only, "Oh."

There was silence for a moment. "Of course, these aren't really Nazi and Dior never -- "Thank you, Ensign. That will be all."

Bausden handed Kirk the uniforms and departed quickly, leaving the admiral glaring at his new possessions. Kirk found himself remembering how Spock and McCoy had looked on Ekos, Spock cutting quite a convincing figure, Bones very awkward and out-of-place. Suddenly he smiled a wicked little-boy smile. These uniforms had potential, and he couldn't wait to discover what his friends thought -- especially with regard to each other. In fact, he'd go down to Sickbay right now to find out. And after scrambling into his new uniform, he did just that.

### Intelligence Quotha

#### by Moria Washburn

Kirk strode into the briefing room followed closely, as usual, by Spock. He glanced around at the assembled personnel — almost the entire command crew — then turned to Dr. McCoy.

"Just what the hell's going here, Bones?" He propped his fists on his hips in his most impressively authoritative pose.

McCoy, who was busily shuffling a stack of papers, looked up. "You've been complaining about how boring this particular mission is; nothing to do but warp through space day after day, how you're even bored of playing chess with Spock ...."

Spock's right eyebrow rose sharply.

"I never said that," protested Kirk hurriedly.

"I was sure I'd heard you say that ...."

"Well, not exactly ..." Kirk had an anxious eye on the Vulcan.

"Anyway, I'm tired of your griping — I'm tired of all of you griping about having nothing fresh to do." McCoy waved the sheaf of papers in the air. "This is fresh — for all of you, that is."

"Oh, come on, Bones," grumbled Kirk. Not another one of your psychological games. I've got better things to do. Spock and I have a chess game scheduled..."

"I have no recollection of that at all, sir. Most peculiar." Spock primly folded his hands behind his back and ignored Kirk's look.

"Shut up and sit down, you two. I already lost Jaeger and Palmer -- although not in the same place, I trust -- and I'm not letting anybody else get away." McCoy attempted a fiercesome glare and only succeeded in getting a general laugh.

"All right," acquiesced Kirk as he settled himself in his favorite chair. "What's this one all about?"

McCoy set the sheaf of papers down on the table next to a small box. "Once upon a time, many years ago, psychologists used to have a certain way of determining an individual's intelligence. They gave tests in which the individual had to solve various types of problems."

"They were known, in general, as 'IQ tests'." Spock was sitting unusually straight, probably because he wasn't leaning toward Kirk as usual. "In the late 20th century there was a good deal of controversy surrounding their use. It was claimed that some tests did not take into consideration cultural and environmental differences and that some individuals were therefore given erroneous and detrimental labels, whereas certain other individuals were able to—"

"Shut up, Spock!" McCoy slapped the table. "I'm the Dragon Master this time." He smiled in satisfaction; he'd succeeded in stumping — and therefore shutting up — the Vulcan.

"!'!! explain it to you later," whispered Kirk helpfully, leaning over toward the Vulcan.

"That is not necessary, sir. I will consult the library computer." Spock's posture was actually good by now.

"These," said McCoy loudly, tapping the stack of papers, "are reproductions of a late 20th century IQ test. They are printed on real paper synthesized by our supplies computer. And these," he picked up a long, thin wooden object from the box, "are genuine pencils, over two hundred years old, supplied by our collector of antique junk — Mr. Sulu."

Sulu puffed slightly with pride. "I've got twenty-three of them. All are over twelve centimeters in length, and nineteen still have erasers left."

Bemused looks traveled around the table as everyone attempted to digest this arcane information. Chekov leaned over to peer into the box.

"Here," McCoy shoved the box into Chekov's nose. "Pass this around the table and have everybody take one."

Sulu's eyes widened and he began to look worried.

McCoy walked around the table, laying a set of papers face down in front of each person. Spock promptly attempted to turn his over and McCoy slapped his hand.

"No fair, Spock," he growled down at the shocked Vulcan. "Everybody starts this test at the same time."

"What?!" It was a simultaneous exclamation from Kirk and Sulu.

"You mean you actually intend for us to take this outdated, disreputable test?" Kirk stared in surprise. "Is this your idea of something fresh to do?"

"You got it," McCoy handed out the last test. "you all get to find out how you'd have fared IQ-wise two hundred years ago, and I get to observe first-hand your responses to this type of test situation—you adaptability, test-taking techniques, test anxiety ...."

"My pencils!" squawked Sulu, almost in anguish.

"McCoy paused. "Don't worry, Sulu, everybody'll be careful with your pencils -- EVERYBODY BE CARE-FUL WITH SULU'S PENCILS!"

DeSalle looked up. "Which end do we write with?"

Sulu moaned.

"I believe it would prove most efficacious to utilize the pointed end containing the graphite for writing. The pink end is for erasure."

"This end?"

"This end." Spock demonstrated with his own borrowed pencil.

"You hold it just like a stylus," observed Uhura sagely.

Sulu hid his face.

"All right, everyone," said McCoy. "Get ready. When I say 'go', you can turn over your tests; just mark the correct answer for each problem, and answer as many as you can. There will be a two hour limit. Any questions?" He looked around the table at the blank faces. "Chekov, get that eraser out of your mouth — is that any way to treat an antique? Sulu? Mr. Sulu, are you ill? No? Okay, everybody ready then?"

"Must we answer the questions in a specific order?" Spock held his pencil delicately poised in mid-air.

"Answer 'em in any order you want," replied McCoy, visualizing the pencil lodged over a pointed ear. "All right, is everybody ready now?" He looked around and saw no overt objections. "Okay -- Go!"

There was a noisy, awkward shuffling of test papers as everyone turned them over. Scott yelped, then began a muffled string of Gaelic curses.

"No talking, Mr. Scott!" order McCoy.

"It bit me!" Scott shook the test vindictively.

"I believe you will find it is a paper cut, Mr. Scott; a very minor but purportedly painful injury."

"NO TALKING, Mr. Spock! Are your pointed ears going bad?" McCoy turned toward Scott. "You won't
die from blood poisoning, Scotty. Stop your bellyaching and take the test! Mr. Chekov, get that lead
out of your mouth. Stop whimpering, Sulu; you're taking all the fun out of this. Spock, will you stop
flipping the test pages?"

"You clearly indicated that I could answer the questions in any order that I wished."

"All right, waste all your time. See if I care -- "

"Will you shut up, Bones?" Kirk performed his obligatory fist-on-the-table slam, causing DeSalle to mismark an answer -- not that he noticed it. "How do you expect us to take this test if you keep talking?"

McCoy glared and sat down, tight-lipped. He was quiet for the next six minutes.

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'Check the two words that are most similar in meaning: carpet, floor, linoleum...' WHAT THE HELL'S LINGLEUM? wondered Kirk as he rubbed the back of his neck. Then amid the sighs, moans, and scritching of pencils, he heard the sound of papers being neatly stacked.

"What's the matter, Spock? Don't tell me you're giving up already." McCoy was whispering now.
"I have completed the test," Spock whispered back.

"What?!" McCoy's voice rose. "You can't have finished it; it's designed to be a full two hour test with only a 25% completion rate. You've only been working on it for ..." McCoy looked at his chronometer, "fifteen minutes!"

"12.235 minutes, taking into account your interruptions." Spock set his test in front of McCoy, carefully placed his still sharp pencil back into the box, and walked out the door.

"Blasted computer-brained Vulcan. Damned organic -- Stop chewing on your pencil, Mr. Chekov."

Kirk glared at his six solved problems and redoubled his efforts on the next section. 'Underline the figure that is the next logical progression in the series.' Kirk studied the abstract figures.

THIS LOOKS STRAIGHTFORWARD ENOUGH -- The tip of his pencil broke with an audible snap.

"My pencill" cried Sulu. "you broke my best Ticonderoga pencill!"

"Stop screaming, Mr. Sulu!" demanded McCoy. "you're upsetting the proper test-taking atmosphere."

He took the pencil away from a mortified Kirk and examined it. "It's all right; it's just the tip of the lead. You can sharpen it."

"Sharpen it?" Sulu's eyes were round and dark with shock.

"Of course," said McCoy impatiently. "You've got a pencil sharpener; i've seen it. All you need to do is stick it —"

"You mean use my authentic mid-20th century public school pencil sharpener? Actually use it?!"

"Stop hyperventilating, Mr. Sulu; that's a medical order. And the rest of you — stop gawking and get on with your tests. You've still got, uh, one hour and forty-one minutes." McCoy handed Kirk another pencil. "Here, take the one Spock used. Maybe it'll help."

Kirk glared.

"Mr. Chekov, once and for all, get that pencil outta your mouth!"



Two days later, Kirk strolled into McCoy's office to find him still staring at the stack of tests.

"Ever finish grading them?" Kirk smirked. Spock still wouldn't play chess with him, and he was
taking out his frustration by periodically appearing to harrass McCoy about the test results.

"Last night." McCoy grimaced. "how they <u>ever</u> used to be able to do this on a regular basis is beyond me. Testers and educators sitting up all night beside whale oil lamps grading papers day after week after month aft—"

"How did they come out?" interrupted Kirk, unsympathetic to McCoy's heroic undertaking.

"You really want to know or are you still just picking on me?"

"Well ...."

"Spock qualifies for Intertel — got every damned question right. He told me that he just looked at the problems to determine the nature and intelligence of the test maker and answered accordingly. Supercillious twit." McCoy snarled at Spock's neat 100% paper sitting on top of the stack.

"What's Intertel?" Kirk studied the top sheet of Spock's test, comparing the answers with his own -- unfavorably.

"Oh, uh, well," McCoy stared at his thumbs. "I had originally intended to, uh, rank the IQ's of our people like they used to — just for the fun of it, you understand. Intertel members boasted IQ's in the top 1% of the population. Actually, Spock's 'way above that. In fact, I couldn't really pin a label on him; he runs completely off-scale."

"Tell me something I don't know." Kirk opened Spock's test to the second page. "Anyone else quallfy for this Intertel?"

"No. But we've got two Mensans and a near miss. Mensa was for individuals in the top 2% of the population."

"Well, don't keep me in suspense, Bones." Kirk winced at the answers on the second page and hurriedly closed the test.

"Ahem. Well, Chekov and DeSalle qualified for Mensa. Scotty just barely missed." McCoy unconsciously twiddled his thumbs. "Of course, you realize, Jim, that these tests were recognized to be rather unreliable even back then. Just because someone scored unusually high or low didn't necessarily mean anything. That person just might have had very good or bad test-taking techniques, or that person might have been feeling ..."

"How did everyone else do?" Kirk's voice was a trifle sharp.

"Uh, most everybody fell right in the middle range -- the 'Norms', if you will ...."

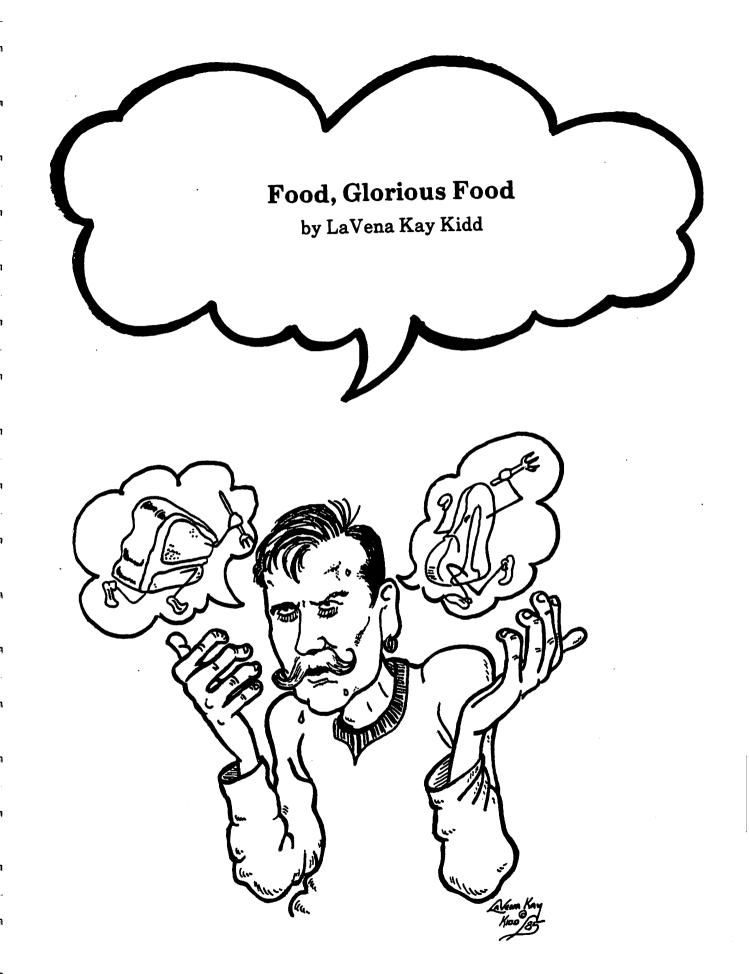
"What about me? Where did I fall? In the upper ... or lower ranges of the Norms?" Kirk's tone was decidedly worried.

"You, ahm, fell right in there with Sulu. In fact, you out-scored Sulu, and you know how bright Sulu is ...."

"Where did my score fall, Bones?!" Kirk's demand was not to be ignored.

"Uh," McCoy squirmed. "Did you ever hear of the Densans," Jim ...?"

(\*Densan = a term first devised in a 20th century publication known as "THE ISOLATED M" as a non-descriminatory "generic ethnic joke:, ie a person with little intelligence, less common sense, and no redeeming social value.]



"Come out and face me, you bum!"

"Why should 1?"

"Do you want to see tomorrow?"

"Alright, since you put it that way." Kevin Riley peered around his doorway and smilled sheepishly.

Uhura wasn't amused. Tapping her foot, she demanded in an impatient tone, "Okay, Riley, what did you do with him?"

Riley's face went blank. "Who?"

"That does it; I'm getting Chris and Janet."

"Please don't do that, Lieutenant; I'm in enough trouble now."

"Maybe I could forget it if ... "

Riley's face brightened and he poked his head out further.

Uhura grabbed a satisfying hunk of his hair and pulled. Riley came tumbling into the corridor and landed in a heap on the deck. The red towel he was wearing abound his waist came loose and Uhura was greeted with a full moon. He whooped and grabbed frantically at the towel until he was covered again. Gingerly he rose, keeping his hands firmly on the towel.

"What happened to your clothes, Riley?"

His face flushed as he gulped, "Well, you see, ! ... "

Uhura's gaze seemed to shoot fire, and he started to inch toward the open door. "Oh, hell! He took them, Lieutenant, and you caught me before I could draw some more from Stores."

"Riley, you're a dork."

"!'m a what?"

"Look it up." Uhura stomped off, leaving him standing mid-corridor, bewildered, as she stepped into the turbolift and turned around to nail him with one last glare.



Uhura located Nurse Christine Chapel in Sickbay, where she dropped into a chair without a word. Chapel had only to see her face to know all was not well.

"Kevin let him steal his clothes."

"Where is he now?"

"I haven't the slightest idea, but I'm going to get Kevin if it's the last thing I do."

"Calm down, Nyota. We've got to find him before the captain discovers he's aboard."

"I know, but where could he have gotten so quickly?"

"In Kevin's clothes he could get anywhere on the Enterprise. We'd better find Janice and start looking."



Harry Mudd sat in the cafeteria staring morosely at a diet plate. This wasn't the Harry Mudd of three years past; he was not a good sixty pounds lighter, with an excellent hair replacement to further enhance his appearance. The only outward sign of the old Harry was his mustache, which he still cultivated to a fine, full brush. Leonard McCoy passed Harry's table laden with a full tray and went a few steps beyond before he stopped. The doctor opened his mouth, then closed it in disbelief. McCoy shook his head and moved on, dismissing the absurd possibility he had just considered. The captain was certainly getting lax about facial hair among the crew these days. Harry ducked his head and dug into the disgusting salad. There wasn't enough protein in it to keep a sparrow alive, much less satisfied. But he finished the salad anyway, then looked longingly at the next table where someone had abandoned a huge slice of chocolate cake, just waiting to be devoured. He stared at it with the fascination of a cobra for a mongoose. If only .... Without conscious volition his hand slowly moved forward, reaching for the cake. Midway it was halted by the iron grip of a hand adorned with lacquered fingernails.

Uhura gently guided his hand back to his own table as she sat down. "Look, me fine bucko, do you or don't you want to get off this ship alive?" Harry looked as though he wanted to cry. "Come on, you pirate, answer me!"

"Darlin", I was wrong. But please, I'm going to be nothing but skin and bones; I'll never live to see Gordon's Planet."

"Harry, you promised us that you would behave."

"Just one little mouthful of chocolate cake -- please?" Harry's eyes were misting over, and there was a distinct rumble from the direction of his stomach.

"Alright, Harry," Uhura relented, "one thin slice. And wait for me here," she ordered, heading for the synthesizer. But when she returned, Harry had disappeared — again.

"What's the matter, Uhura? You lose something?" The normally composed lieutenant almost dropped the cake at the sound of the familiar voice, and turned to smile nervously at her captain.

"No, only someone who was supposed to meet me who didn't show up."

"Whoever that is can't be too bright for standing you up, Lieutenant."

"Why, thank you, Captain," she replied breezily, commanding her insides to stop quivering like jelly. The captain's eyes were focused on her hands, giving her the uneasy feeling that they were shaking.

"Lieutenant, are you going to eat that cake?" Uhura looked at Kirk's tray, which contained only one lonely salad.

"Please, be my guest, Captain," she answered with relief.

Kirk quickly added the cake to his tray, adding, "Uhura, do me a favor: don't tell McCoy."

She nodded absently and left for the door where she paused to look back. The cake was already gone and Kirk was sensuously licking his fingers.



In the main rec room Harry was sitting at a table, secluded by a thick screen of plants. Before him was a plate of fresh, crunchy carrot chips. Harry was muttering to himself, anxiously trying to figure a means of lifting someone else's diet card. "Where aboard this hell ship does the crew leave their precious cards?!" He stood and began to leave the table, then turned back to scoop up the carrots.



The steam room was crowded, with nice, fat clouds of steam billowing around the occupants. Harry crept up to the door, pressed his nose against the window, and grinned. If he couldn't see in, then no one could see out. The designers of the Enterprise hadn't counted on the burglary skills of a Harry Mudd. He went through three lockers in five minutes, and in the fourth Harry found one of the elusive diet cards. As he heard the door to the steam room open, Harry scuttled away to the nearest turbolift.

The cafeteria was nearly deserted when Harry arrived, almost running to the synthesizer, his hand shaking so much that he had trouble fitting in the card. He punched the maximum portion indicator with a sigh of pure anticipation. The door opened to reveal a cup of herbal tea and a thin wafer. Grabbing the wafer in disgust, he washed it down with the tea in one gulp. The damn tea didn't even have sweetener in it. Harry slammed the cup into the disposal chute and hurried out of the room.



Janice Rand poked Kevin Riley sharply in the ribs, Uhura had her finger poised menacingly in front of his nose, and Chapel was standing behind him, her hands firmly clutching his shoulders.

"Look, Riley, we've got to find Mudd before the captain learns he's aboard. We all promised the governor of Youp that we would get Harry far, far away from his planet." Uhura was very, very angry.

"Harry's more trouble than he's worth. Why didn't you just leave him on Youp?" Riley asked in a desperate attempt to shift the blame.

"Because they were going to cut off his head, and even Mudd doesn't deserve that."

Riley bobbed his head and leaned back to keep his nose away from her nails. "Airight, aiready. I'm convinced. What do you ladies want me to do?"

"Search, Riley," Uhura ordered. "Every dirty nook and cranny aboard this ship will have your shining face stuck into it at least once in the next ten hours. He have only that long before we reach Gordon's Planet."

"Okay, I'm on my way." Riley twisted and almost fell in his haste to escape.



Harry was on his hands and knees, hiding behind a bed. The sounds of someone singing in the shower broke over his head like a thunderstorm. Resting on the bed was an open USP parcel, the delicious scent of sardines wafting in temptation. Harry gulped down the contents and almost gagged: salty, much too salty. He crawled out of the cabin and detoured down a ladder tube where he clung to the rungs, panting. His stomach felt like a deflated balloon. "Come on, Harry, you're smarter than this bunch of Starfleet ninnies. Wait a minute and think this out. Got to find me a nice big crewman that eats a lot!" He climbed out the tube feeling pleased with himself.

Twenty minutes later he found his target. The crewman must have been seven feet tall and weighed

six hundred pounds. Harry followed the huge man down to Engineering and waited for his opportunity, which occured when the man exchanged his uniform for a coverall. Harry struck, lifting the diet card from the clothes. As an afterthought, he left the diet card for herb tea and wafers in its place.

The cafeteria was empty, to his relief. Again he punched the maximum and waited. As the door rose Harry stumbled backwards. A vegetable plate of midget proportions rested inside. Woodenly, Harry looked down at the card still clutched in his sweating hand. In the space for religion the word "Catholic" was neatly printed. Of course, Harry's latest victim was fasting for Lent. Harry tossed the card down the disposal chute and left in disgust.



Kevin Riley wiped his greasy hands on his trousers as Scott walked by and looked at his scuffed boots. He stopped, waiting for Riley to re-emerge from the conduit he was inspecting.

"Laddie, are ye sure of this report of a mouse in Engineering?"

"Best authority, Commander Scott."

"Wi' all the noise ye're makin', he'll ne'er catch the wee beastie. Couldn't ye do what me granny used to do, and put out a bit o' cheese in a trap?"

"They don't make traps that big," Riley muttered to himself.

"What was that, laddie?"

"Nothing, nothing at all. If you'll excuse me, sir, I've got to keep looking for this rat." At that he dropped to his knees and began crawling between the machinery, poking and peering in resignation. Scott shook his head and wandered off, obviously trying to figure out if they were making junior officers weirder these days, or if it was just Kevin Riley who didn't have all his oars in the water.



Harry's knees were like rubber. He was dutifully pumping away on an exercycle; nearby, Chekov was lustily rowing down the Volga. Harry dismounted and walked by the rowing machine where Chekov's cheeks were a cheery red, wincing at the Russian's aura of health. Once in the dressing room Harry threw on Riley's uniform and grabbed Chekov's diet card. This time would be the charm, as the Russian ensign certainly wasn't on a diet. Food, glorious food!

It was supportine for the next shift, and the lines at the synthesizers were long. Harry sighed with impatience, and joined the closest file. In just a few more minutes he would be full. As his turn arrived, he stepped briskly up to the slot to insert Chekov's card. The door opened, allowing the lovely aroma of steak, baked potatoes with sour cream, and hot apple pie to assault Harry's nose.

"Harry." Someone was tapping him on the shoulder; he wanted to scream. He turned to face the stern visage of Nurse Chapel. "Come along, Harry; you're needed."

"But -- but -- " he sputtered desperately as Chapel grabbed his wrist, digging her nails in a bit for emphasis. Harry cringed and managed a weak smile. "Please, just one nibble, a tiny snippet, merely enough for a hummingbird."

"Harry, I said now."

He took one last look at the food, then meekly followed Chapel out of the cafeteria. But the corridor was crowded, and Harry took the first opportunity to duck down a side passage while Chapel's attention was momentarily distracted. She immediately doubled back to search, cursing herself for the carelessness.

Harry had found another dressing room. A long line of uniforms hung invitingly urging him to relieve his itching palms, and Harry was never one to ignore an itch. His little scratching expedition resulted in only one card, though, and he headed for another cafeteria with the spring now gone from his step.

The dinner crowd had thinned somewhat and there was no wait in getting to the magic slot. He deposited the card and waited. The door opened and the sight it revealed caused big fat tears to roll down his cheeks. It was another vegetable plate, one especially assembled for the <a href="Enterprise">Enterprise</a>'s first officer. Harry reached for the plate, but then changed his mind. It was to be all or nothing! Retrieving Spock's card, the then dumped it in one of the disposal chutes, and had a pleasant vision of a Vulcan without his dinner. At least Harry wouldn't be the only one going without food tonight.



Harry was huddled in a miserable ball in a remote corner of the hothouse. Somewhere below his belt his stomach was grumbling noisily. He had to get food .... "Think, Harry, think! Who aboard this miserable hulk is well fed? Of course: Kirk! If anyone is full, it has to be the captain." He leapt to his feet, face glowing with anticipation.

Kirk's door proved to be a fragile barrier to Harry's delicate touch. Inside, the cabin was dark, so Harry padded his way carefully across the floor to Kirk's clothes, victory within his grasp.

Tiptoeing out of the room with his prize clutched triumphantly, he went to heed the siren call of the nearest synthesizer, blind to everything else. Thus he was not aware of Chapel, who was standing just inside the doorway. Heading straight for the nearest slot, he inserted the card and grabbed the emerging plate without even looking at the contents. He was so very, very hungry. Harry sat at the nearest table, first intending to indulge himself in the pure pleasure of just smelling the feast. He closed his eyes and breathed deeply, inhaling the rich aroma of ... tomatoes? He opened his eyes and began to cry at the sight he beheld. Heaped on his plate — or rather, Kirk's plate — was a king-sized salad. It was too mcuh; he laid his head on the table and sobbed.

"Harry, it's alright," Chapel soothed as she gently helped him out of the chair to guide him from the room.

"What have I done to deserve this?" Harry stifled a sob and stopped to gaze blearily back at the offending salad. "I've always tried to give every sucker an even break."

"Harry, lies like that could be the reason you're here now." Harry stopped sniffling and glared at Chapel.

"Let's not get carried away, nursie," he replied in disgust.

"Never fear, Harry. But come on -- we go into orbit around Gordon's Planet in half an hour, and we've got to get you ready for transport."

"Gordon's Planet ... now that sounds like a place where a man could go to get a square meal," he mused, visibly cheering.



An hour later Harry was safely tucked aboard a shuttle en route to the central import station on Gordon's Planet. He was a happy man.

"Thank goodness the Gordians don't allow transporters on their planet. We could never have gotten Harry past the transporter chief in his condition." Uhura was sitting in her cabin, her bare feet propped up on the bed. Chapel sat on the floor with her back against the wall. Rand was laying on the floor with her chin resting on her forearms.

"Why the ban on the transporters, Janice?" Chapel looked questioningly at Rand, lifting one eyebrow. The thought crossed Rand's mind that Chapel has been spending too much time with McCoy and Spock.

"Well, it has to do with the original settlers. They were a religious cult that was devoted to purity in everything. To this day, the entire population of Gordon's are strictly vegetarian."

Chapel started laughing. "You mean we've sent Harry to a place where he'll never get his idea of a square meal?"

"You got it, Chris." Uhura was wearing a very broad grin.

Planetside, Harry had just learned the unpleasant facts of life on Gordon. The man at the counter at the station's Lone Cafe couldn't understand why the stranger was pounding on the counter and wailing, "Uhura, I'll get you for this if I have to live to be three hundred!"



#### Kitchen Interlude

#### by Rosemarie Eierman

"Another party," growled Petra, Head Cook.

"You'd think she hated cooking," Sue-Lynn Anewinter, often Cook, occasionally Supply Clerk (just to keep her busy), commented to the world at large — in other words, to the second shift culinary staff of USS Enterprise. "Nimmegadda, you love cooking ...."

"The cooking's fine, it's the -- "

" -- and the eating's not bad, either, right?" Sue-Lynn finished. She gave a meaningful look at Petra's waistline, which everybody admitted could do with a bit less food and a bit more exercise.

Petra admitted it as much as anybody. "Don't I know it. And that's exactly my point: we've had far too many parties lately. Now I admit all of the running around fixing up after the explosion pretty well wore off what we are during that 'orgy' after the Vejur mission, but then there was the we-made-it-home-in-one-piece-eat-drink-and-be-merry-for-tomorrow-Kirk-may-die party, and then there was shore leave while we waited for the brass to decide what to do; we went from bar to restaurant to saloon to coffee house to night club to deli to cabaret to grill to whatever, all because we were too worried about Kirk's court martial -- god knows why -- to have any real fun. And then there was the eat-drink-and-be-merry-for-Kirk-did-not-die-but-lucked-out-somehow party. Then there was your birthday, Sue-Lynn, and then ...."

"The anniversary of the christening of the Enterprise party and then The Captain's Birthday," helped Mary Lou Kendall, Dietitian.

"And then it was Mr. Spock's birthday, and we made up for the thirty or forty that never got celebrated before ..." Petra continued.

"And THEN it was the Engineering department's celebration of the <u>Scientific Universe Magazine's</u>
Prize for Creative Thinking — though why they should get it when practically the whole ship contributed,
I'll never know," Sue-Lynn insisted with more than a trifle exaggeration.

"Which was why you made an extra batch of everything for yourselves," ibn Faisel (their boss) put in from the doorway to his office.

"Yeah, well." Petra again. "But then it was your birthday, Faisel, and that huge, lush, creamy, gooey ...."

Mary Lou groaned. "I ate so much of that I was sick!"

"And then at Starbase 8, Buc Kosnecki's medal and a bonus for invention of that framistantor thing caught up with him ...."

"So you made him one of those lush, creamy extravaganzas," Faisel accused. "Cheapened my whole birthday celebration."

"Sorry, Boss," Petra replied without the least bit of contrition in her voice. "After all, he did buy everyone on the ship a gigantic box of candy."

"Next time you want a raise I'll remember that."

Everyone laughed. Petra shrugged. "Candy's better than peanuts."

When the laughing and groaning ceased, Sue-Lynn commented, "Petra, keep that up and you'll be back repairing ovens. Then we can have a Nimmegadda's-busted-for-destroying-the-galley party."

"How 'bout a Sue-Lynn-finally-gets-a-ladle-up-her-butt party?" Petra fairly snarled. Repairing ovens were here sorest point ever since she had found herself forced to repair and reprogram one after Supply Department repair crews found themselves commandeered to assist with the post-explosion clean-up down in Engineering. The oven worked, but only after a fashion: it made a perfect anything other than what was requested.

"Ladies, you may not be officers, but could you please be 'gentlemen'?" That was not quite fair; all present (except Faise), of course) were ensigns.

"Sorry, Faisel," everybody mumbled, semi-contritely. There was silence for a moment.

Then there came an interruption. "Hey, gang, guess what!" It was Viktor Zarelli, cook on the third shift, waving a piece of paper. "Science just got the word — their big astro-physics project won Vulcan's Science Award for this year. They're throwing a bunsen burner party and need this stuff as soon as possible." Sue-Lynn snatched it from his hand.

"WHAT is a bunsen burner party?"

"Huh? Well, you've seen those little flame heating units they have in the labs." Everyone nodded. "The things are used all the time to heat coffee or soup, toast sandwiches, fry donuts, stuff like that, whenever some experiment can't be left long enough to go get a decent meal."

"We know, Viktor. Get on with it."

Viktor shrugged. "Somehow Anna Wnub persuaded Mr. Spock to let them cook a whole meal that way! We're the honored guests — seems they think we earned it during the Vejur mission. That was when they made a lot of their most significant observations, or something."

"And we were force feeding them .... How nice."

"How fattening," Sue-Lynn taunted. "Just look at this list! Half of it's carbohydrated."

Viktor knew of Sue-Lynn's predilection for what the twentieth century called "junk food." "Anewinter, shame on you. You of all people know that free food, even torte and taffy, is never fattening."

# Ode to Star Trek on a Fringe Station by Bonnie Backslider Booneyville, U.S.A. (c) 1983 Saturday night, relaxed at last, Dishes done, the clock's half-past; The TV trills commercials trite. "Reception's great!" | sigh, "tonight ..." The teaser teases, skin tones true; I turn up the sound a notch or two When, suddenly, my spirits fall As uniforms begin to pall ... The starship sails into the murk: A strong male voice (it must be Kirk?) Garbles the usual opening word ... (The rest of the statement, barely heard.) Ghostly faces come and go, Vague ... distorted .. to and fro. Sound reception peaks, is lost; Scotty frowns through snowy frost ... Vainly, with the dials I fiddle! Thick black lines cavort and twiddle, Dissecting picture through the middle. (A split-level Spock spouts: "Hey, diddle diddle." My reticent set endures wild cursing! The ancient tuner shows no mercy; As story seems to waver and smear ... Commercials cut in loud and clear! Comes the punch line, never failing, "Foiled again!" by now I'm wailing. Theme song swells ... melodic ... formal ... Channel 12 returns to normal.

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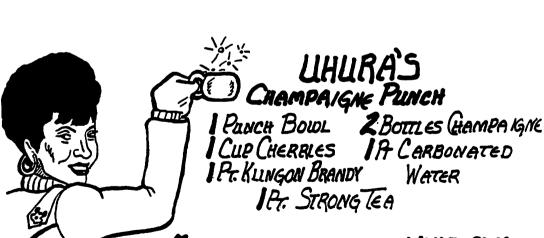
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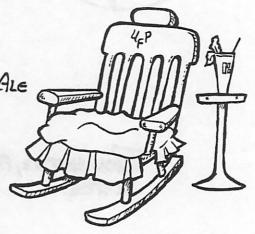
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MIX FIRST THREE INGREDIENTS AND DRINK. SAVE COFFEE TO MILL CET! ALPHA EELS.

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# THE HUMAN ADVENTURE

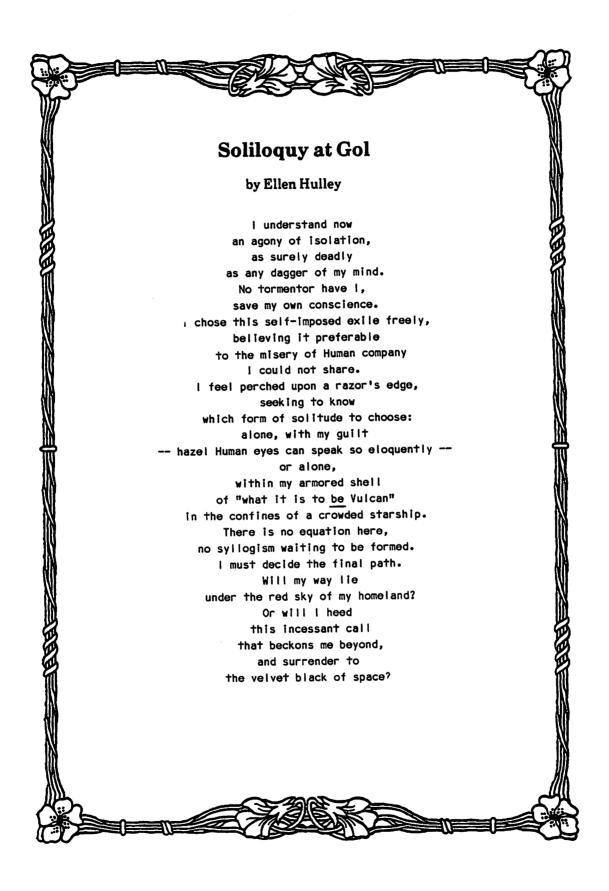
Sir, you haven't logged a single star hour in 2½ years. That, plus your unstabiliarity with the ship's redesign, in my opinion, sir, seriously jeopardizes this mission.

Jim. I want this. As much as you wanted the Enterprise, I want this.

What Viger needs to evolve is a human quality.

It seems my bluss has been called.

Well, it's been a long time since I delivered a baby. I hope we got this one OFF to a good start.



### Hobson's Choice

#### by Kim Knapp

"Goddammit, Heihachiro, I won't do it!" Eyes blazing, arms and hands clenched, chest not quite heaving, the admiral stood slowly from one of the plush chairs that decorated Admiral Nogura's office.

"You don't have any choice, Admiral." The last word was gently emphasized. "As your commanding officer, I am giving you a lawful order." Pity, sympathy, showed briefly in Nogura's black eyes, but was overpowered by sheer strength of purpose — will and demand that seemed out of place in the thin, fragile Asian's body.

"It's the push behind these orders, the <u>private</u> meaning I won't accept!" the admiral returned hotly. "You can't -- you cannot ask me to sleep with someone -- to use that kind of guile -- on someone! Not when it's only to suit your purposes -- you don't care how you use people, as long as you get what you want, do you?"

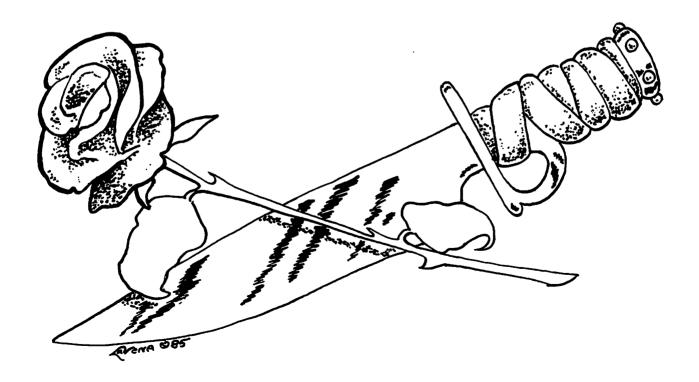
Nogura smiled benignly. "Please, sit down. As part of my staff, your job is to do the work I delegate — work, in this case, I can obviously not do myself. How you accomplish it is your problem. You have earned your stripes, as you said, and shown an exceptional ability to perform any task ably and efficiently. This is merely another task to perform, and perhaps it is not as difficult as you might think."

The admiral paced the spacious office angrily, reflecting on Nogura's words. He was right; there really was no choice. Insubordination could result in either a court martial or a forced retirement. And there wouldn't be a shred of evidence about the real reason, the underlying purpose of the orders.

"All right. I'll do it. But I damn well don't like it. I'm not ready to retire now, or I'd throw these orders in your face!"

Nogura smiled again, reached into his current business rack for a tape. "Whether you like it or not no longer matters. Here is what does: the <u>Enterprise</u> docks in two hours, and I want you there to greet her captain."

Lori Clani, admiral, stood at the door of Nogura's office wishing it were the old-fashioned type that she could slam. Only her anger kept her eyes from filling with tears of humiliation. "Never again, you son of a bitch," she grated from between clenched teeth. "I'll never whore for you again!"



# Yesterday's Shadow

by Vel Jaeger



-Acre

The bird was black,

the deathly color of a starless night.

It shouldn't have been here;

all the fellow nestlings were dust.

The man seated before it on the gritty metal floor
watched the creature with a concentration born of desperation.

Eyelids burned with lack of sleep,

but the mind behind them was searching,

reaching for the mystery of the bird,

why it had survived when so many had succumbed.

The alien soul had the strength of an iron band to weld it to life.

And he was also iron,

struggling to take hold and survive all that demanded him to yield.

The bird was a treasure,

the final link

to the cool, green haven where he had breathed his first;
the vibrant will delighted the man and his companions.
With one swift motion he prepared to capture the bird,
though it screamed and fought him with talons and beating wings.
Strong, thin hands caught the wings and held it still.
Gradually the bird ceased the violent thrashing,
and the man began to stroke it, crooning.

#### "She's dead."

The words were whispered,
yet thundered around the tiny sanctuary.
Tears stung his eyes and agony tore through his chest.
A moan erupted from his throat and keened above him into the smokey air.
The man felt his soul dying and his ears roared with grief.
He seemed to be lost in this well of pain for centuries,
before the hesitant touch of a hand brought him back.

His eyes opened in response,
and the young face that greeted him was wet with tears.
The youth tried to speak but couldn't;
instead he gestured at the older man's hands.
The man looked down and the bird was still there,
clutched in his graceful fingers.
His grasp loosened and the bird slowly slipped to the floor,
never again to delight anyone.

#### "Kirk!"

Khan raised his head, his face a mask of anguish.

And thus is vengeance born.



# FROM HELL'S HEART

You are my superior officer. You are also my friend. I have been, and always shall be, yours.

Then you've never faced that situation - never faced death.

I don't believe in the no-win scenario.

I don't like to lose.

The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few... or the one.

How we face death 11 at least as important as how we face life.

He really unit dead - as long as we remember him.

"What's this? The intrepid graduate going mushy on me?" She had tried to be blase. "I'm the poet here: that's my half of the dialogue you're using."

"I'dalmost forgotten. You've still years of study ahead before you can take your rightful place among the literary hierarchy. I can imagine you at some marvelously ivy-covered institution: you'll have your future in the past, and I'm heading in the opposite direction. Is it conceivable that we'll meet again in your poetry? Will you make me immortal?"

"Ah, Jim, you won't need a poet for that. You'll do well enough on your own. I've seen in written out there," and she gestured at the night sky.

And she had taken her place, as he had predicted. Nothing spectacular or flashy, and probably few outside the literary circles even knew who she was. But every now and then he would read something she'd written, and recognized himself or Will or Matt — it was hard to tell which at times. It warmed a special place within him, knowing that she understood them all so well, this sky-faring breed of his.

Fly away, young eagle, and spread your wings in flight
that we might hear your cry of victory.

Soar higher, golden dreamer,
to stream your banner star by star
so far from earthbound mortals.

[from STARSEEKER, by Marilyn Decker Callan, UFP (c) Stardate 1520.7]

The clang of Will's Academy ring as it hit the floor broke his reverie, snapping him rudely back to the present. Impulsively Kirk made a decision, and keyed a switch on his panel. "Uhura, I'm going planetside for a few hours. Advise the transporter tech, please." Not waiting for an acknowledgement, he closed the link. Striding to the wall locker, he tossed his uniform blouse down the 'cycler and shrugged into a nondescript, all-purpose exercise shirt.

Ignoring the puzzled expressions of the crew in the transporter room, he gave the coordinates he knew by heart. As the shimmer of the beam ceased he moved purposefully to the ramshackle boathouse, where he found all that he sought without difficulty. Then he headed toward the craft moored at the dock, and with a surety of experience raised the sails on the hoby cat, a small boat of a design that had withstood the challenge of time. It was barely planet down, and the mist still hovered over the lake. It was a mystery that one who lived his destiny in the stars would feel so at home floating on fathomless depths — a mystery that returned each time he pondered a favorite scrap of poetry, which said all that moved him. Reality was still grimly waiting, not to be ignored, but for now he let his spirit be carried by the wind, and washed in the gold of a rising sun.

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky ...

[from SEA FEVER, by John Masefield, Terran poet, 19-20th Century, Old System Dating]



on when we're not on duty." The older man smiled wistfully and added, "Who knows? Perhaps we'll be assigned to the same ship someday."

"I'd like that very much, s-- Matt!" An uncontrolled grin lit the younger man's face as he pondered a universe of unblinking stars, and what his place might be there.

Kirk did eventually serve with Matt Decker. But by then Kirk had received his lieutenants' promotion, gaining confidence with his years and experience, and Decker was a full commander. Those three years together were rich in memories, with the excitement of space, but also the weight of command. He'd had to turn in a damning report on Ben Finney, an incident that that returned to haunt him. But that tour of duty on the Republic had given him the chance to know Matt Decker the man, as well as the officer. It was with rejuctance that Kirk accepted the transfer to the Yorktown that accompanied his promotion to lieutenant commander. It had come so unexpectedly, so early in his career that it had seemed unreal, dreamlike. He and Matt were apparently destined for separate roads, as only a few month's later Decker picked up captain's stripes and was given command of the destroyer Tamerlane.

They'd met now and again, more often than not in the course of duty, and with little time for socializing. The last exception had been shore leave on Qal'at IV, when Kirk had sought Decker out after learning of his wife's sudden and tragic death. Eianor Decker had been working on the research vessel Galen when the ship had vaporized itself in a matter/antimatter implosion. The whole quadrant had listened in on the subspace comm link as the crew had frantically worked to forestall the catastrophe. Matt Decker had been one of these listeners.

Kirk had caught up with the captain in one of those sleazy bars that have persisted in ports since the time of the earliest wooden ships. He had expected to find his newly-widowed former instructor to be thoroughly drunk, and felt chilled when Decker appeared to be stone sober. No expression was reflected in the icy blue eyes, only an emptiness.

"Hello, Jim, nice to see you again," was his ridiculously casual greeting.

"Matt, I'm so sorry about Eianor. She was such a terrific person, and I know you must—"

"Hazards of the job, Jim. She knew the risks. Buy you a drink? Are you here on leave or just stopping by?"

Kirk went along with the pretense, and decided he would discover an emergency repair aboard the Lexington that needed attention. It would give them some extra time, and he'd never before taken advantage of his position as first officer. He owed the whole Decker family too much to let Matt face this alone.

"The engineer decided to dock us for awhile for some repair work on the converters, and I thought I'd use some of the leave I've built up. Care for company for a few days?" Taking the slight shrug for assent, Kirk did his best to get Decker to release some of his grief, but never succeeded. He'd often thought since then that Matt had obtained relief from Eianor's death only when he'd thrown himself into the Doomsday Machine.

An irony of that shore leave was that confirmation of Decker's promotion to commodore had come through that week. He had been no more able to celebrate his promotion than he had been able to mourn the death of his wife. Kirk had not been surprised when Matt elected to take a line command, with the starship <u>Constellation</u> rather than a staff position at Fleet HQ. It was only a year later that Kirk had the painful duty of writing the stargrams to WIII and Marilyn informing them of Matt's death. He had been grateful he didn't have to face them then.

It would be good to see Marilyn again. She was one of the few remaining people left on Earth that held pleasant ties with the past. She had never made demands on him, and had always been there as a friend, even after she had married. They'd spent some happy times together in his last year at the Academy, and she'd been willing to accompany Kirk on those irksome occasions that required a "proper" social escort. She had been familiar with the protocol because of her father's teaching position, but had been a pleasant change from cadet company. "Now you have all the necessary accounterments," she would say with a laugh. "Clean uniform, polished brass, and a good-looking wench draped across your arm!" There had been no games or pretense with her, no front to maintain.

"Harvest moon, Jim. Last chance to kiss a maiden under one before you'll be flying past it." She had kept the chatter light.

Kirk sat at his console, the painful task of recording the loss of a friend in cold, official terms was completed, but it had left him feeling ghoulish. The bright objects arranged before him on the work surface belied his mood: a few bits of ribbon, unchanged for centuries in their colors, each recalling an event or place — purple for wounds received, blue with stars for gallantry — their simplicity deceptive of the prices paid for them. Kirk and many others were alive now because of that last scrap of ribbon and Will's act that earned it.

Though they had never served aboard the same ship together, the ties of the past had prompted him to stay in touch with Will, and Will with him. Will had often referred to the times Jim had taken him out in the Deckers' boat, even though he'd only just become a teenager on their last outing, shortly before Kirk graduated from Starfleet Academy. They'd known each other for so long ....

Kirk had to reach a bit further into his memory to recall the first time he'd met Matt's family, but it was a pleasant exercise. Kirk had fallen into the habit of staying behind after his class in tactics with Decker had been dismissed to discuss a fine point of the day's lecture, or to ask questions. Sometime midway through the course Matt — rather, Lieutenant Commander Decker, he was then — had invited the cadet to continue the discussion at his quarters over dinner. Flattered, embarrassed, and stammering, Kirk had accepted eagerly.

The meal had been a warm, relaxed experience, providing a needed respite to a lonely student away from his home and roots. Seventeen was a lonely age in any circumstances, but the pressure of the academy made it worse. Young Jim Kirk, a naturally gregarious personality, had taken to Decker's family as if he were attending a reunion of his own family. Elanor Perry Decker was a gracious hostess, a midwesterner like himself. Though she was an astronomer, she had obtained a planetside study grant at the Sciences Center while Matt was assigned to the Academy. She had logged almost as much space time as her husband, and joined in the technical conversations with an expert's ease. Marilyn, the oldest child, was only a year younger than Kirk, and had seemed to be all eyes and legs, with the adolescent promise of becoming a statuesque beauty. She had said little that first meeting, but Kirk had had the feeling that he was being analyzed, categorized, sorted, and filed for future reference. The atmosphere had been kept light thanks to the youngest member of the family: Willy. With the unbridled enthusiasm of an incorrigible ten-year-old, he had drawn Kirk to relate stories of his lowa farm, making that quiet existence sound exciting by virtue of its difference.

That had been only the first of many evenings in the Decker home, though usually there had been other cadets present. Decker never seemed to tire of the discussions, nor of the endless questions from his students. Ocassionally, Kirk had the family to himself, and grew to enjoy even the ebulience of young Willy. Though he had little leisure time because of studies, he had spent some of it enjoyably sailing in the Deckers' small boat. The vastness of the ocean had been such a difference form the manmade lakes where he had learned, but that had only served to thrill him more. Marilyn would sometimes accompany Jim and Willy, shyly quiet, seeming to become part of the background ....

The sole piece of jewelry in Will's personal effects brought back other memories — a Starfleet Academy ring, left behind locked in a vault because Decker, like Kirk, never wore it. Imitating his model in yet another way? Kirk seldom wore the ornate symbol out of distaste for personal jewelry, or any other adornment, for that matter. "I don't need a ring on my hand to remind me of the Academy — I live it in my actions," he would say when questioned on the subject.

Kirk thought back through the years to the occasion when he had received his ring. In accordance with tradition it was early in his final year at the academy. The social event had changed little from its origins in older academies, and was still referred to by the cadets as the "ring dance." Kirk had gone tradition one better, and ordered his ring in a metal no longer in fashion, but one which struck his fancy — yellow gold. Most of the cadets chose some exotic import, such as Andorian platinum, but Kirk was sometimes stubbornly archaic in his whims. His date was Marilyn Decker.

The lights had dimmed on schedule, and by the light of Earth's moon she had slipped the ring onto his finger. There was a comfort in that ceremony, as simply knowing that he was on the final leg of his scholastic journeys made the work ahead seem bearable. And indeed, it seemed like only moments had passed till the final ceremony of his academy days had been performed.

"Well, Jim, now you're off to the stars with the rest of the young eagles!" Lieutenant Commander Matthew Decker cheerfully pumped the young graduate's hand. "We're going to miss having you hanging around the house, though my brain can use the rest from being picked clean by you young birds."

"I can't thank you enough for your patience and help, sir. You and your family have been so generous — "

"Belay that 'sir' bilge, Jim. You're an officer now, by Federation decree. It's 'Matt' from now

Kirk stood at the observation port, still absorbed in an attempt at convincing himself that the awesome cloud that was V'ger was gone and the starship Enterprise truly his again. The exhilaration of battle had waned and now the thought of the mountain of red tape to be processed made him shudder. He should be in his quarters tackling the herculean chore. "Might as well begin with the worst," he grumbled to himself, keying the port to restore opacity. V'ger was gone to whatever destiny it had chosen, and Starfleet had enough data to study for years to come. For now, there were some very human beings to be dealt with, and that task was not one he welcomed.

Stepping into the 'lift, he spoke the direction, "captain's quarters" and began marshalling his thoughts. Once sequestered in those quarters Kirk placed a call Earthside. The face which appeared on the viewing wall was that of a woman somewhere in her thirties, slender features framed by warm brown hair and centered with dark eyes that were most unnaturally large. An expression of pleasant surprise formed as she recognized Kirk.

"Jim! I thought it would be Will calling when the center said a message was coming through from the Enterprise. Don't tell me you've been caught joy-riding again! I thought admirals were supposed to be above all that. I know! That brother of mine couldn't resist showing off his prized possession, could he!"

"Marilyn ... it's about Will ...." Kirk's voice faltered as he searched for a means to begin.
All these years, all those vibrant young lives ended prematurely, and he still didn't know how to break
the news of tragedy to their families. But his face carried an aura of death, and the woman on the other
end of the link could sense the reason.

"Jim, you're trying to tell me that something has happened to Will. Is it that same 'something' that happened to my father seven years ago? Has another Decker given a life for 'duty'?" Bitterness suffused her voice, and the large eyes darkened as they glistened with tears. "I knew the ship had left orbit ahead of schedule, but I figured that was probably because my hotshot kid brother couldn't wait to have his starship all to himself."

"Will saved us all, Marilyn, from something that I still don't understand. But I do know that if he were here now, alive, that you probably wouldn't be, along with the rest of sentient life on Earth. I'm not even sure that Will is dead; that's why I had him listed officially as missing, along with the other casualty."

"You had him listed? Who the hell gave the ship to you?" she exploded, a tumult of grief bringing her to the verge of shricking. "The last I heard, Will was the captain of the Enterprise. Or does this have something to do with your wearing improper insignia? Your stars are missing, Admiral!"

"Nogura and the rest of Starfleet placed me in command, Marilyn. I took a demotion to captain, and Will became my exec — and a commander. Will was ... brilliant, technically speaking, but he just didn't have enough combat experience. That's why I had the center seat."

"And I called Will the hotshot! You never miss a trick, do you, Jim? Still using people. Whose job are you after next — Nogura's?" Anger followed a numb acceptance, but tears were streaming down her cheeks. "Why are you wasting time talking to me? I can't help your career anymore, I've run out of relatives who can sacrifice themselves for you."

"Will was my friend," Kirk replied, "and it wouldn't have been right for his sister to learn this from a newscast or a cold, official dispatch," he concluded, his voice reflecting his weariness. "That's the way you had to hear about your father's death. I tried to stop him, too, but Matt — at least him I could understand. He'd just seen four hundred of his crew die, and had never really recovered from the loss of your mother. For him, it was a merciful release from a life of waking nightmares. But Will had everything waiting for him, and I couldn't prevent him from throwing it all away. I tried! God, Marilyn, how I tried!" Kirk lowered his gaze, staring blankly at the clenched fists his hands had formed.

"Still carrying around everyone's guilt, aren't you," came the remark, but now her words had lost their bitter edge. "I'm sorry; I'm trying to get rid of my pain by dumping it on you, and you've always taken more than your share. Will you be coming down? We haven't seen much of you lately, not since you hid yourself away to play war games with the brass."

"I can arrange it. A casualty call is in order; they can't refuse me that, even if they do take back the ship." Kirk's smile was wan, crooked with fatigue.

"I'll keep a light in the window for you, sailor."

"You always have, and for that I thank you. Till later." Kirk pressed the release, and keyed in the log to file his official report on the loss of a Starfleet officer. "Subject: Willard Decker, Captain, serial number ...."





### Joachim's Lament

by Debbie Gilbert

In the Nineties, we were supermen, in every way superior, Yet in comparison with Khan, The best of us seemed inferior.

We made a pact, sealed with our blood;
Mine flowed beneath his knife.
I spoke the pledge of loyalty
Made forfeit with my life.

Khan was a genius, as he well knew.

His expertise was vast,
With animal cunning and instincts sharp
And reactions lightning-fast.

He led us on a great crusade:
He wished to improve humanity.
I believed in every word he said
Before he lost his sanity.

Fifteen years on a wasted world,
Each day a struggle for life.
I remember too well how Khan went mad
When he lost his beloved wife.

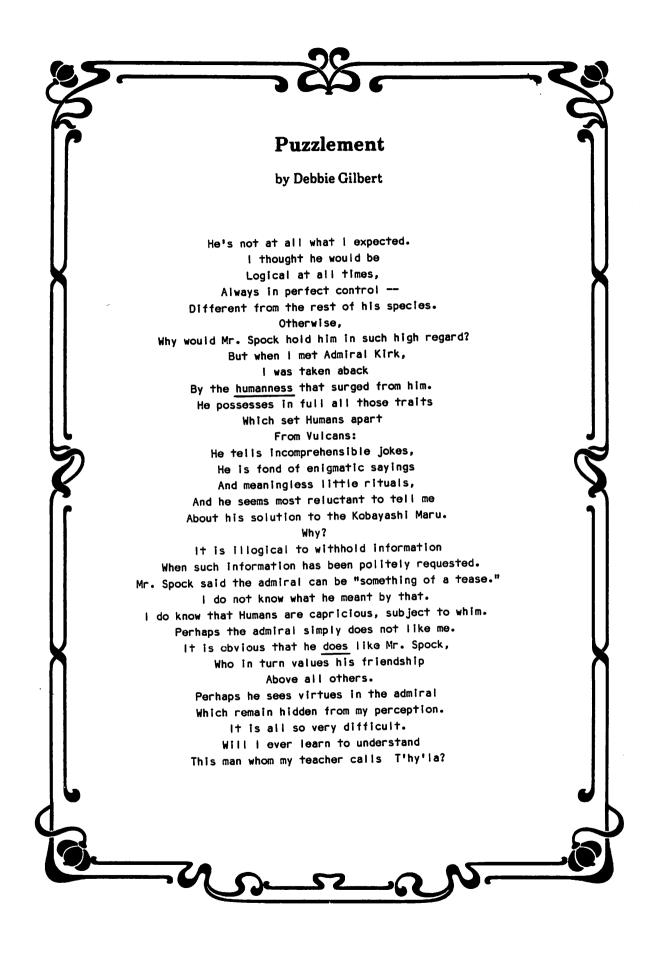
From that day on, my friend was changed, Consumed by bitterness and hate. He blamed a man named James T. Kirk For an inexplicable twist of fate.

Now he's raging through the galaxy, Trailing murders in his wake. I want no part of his revenge, Yet I remain for honor's sake.

Do you understand, Khan, why you're doing this?
What can you gain by senseless killing?
Like an android, compliant, I follow your orders,
But my mind is rebellious, unwilling.

I'm haunted by faces of innocent dead;
The sight makes me sick inside.
I want no innocent blood on my hands,
Only to run, to escape, to hide!

Khan, I once knew you, as brothr, as friend.
What has happened to my leader now?
I hate you for your vengeful scheme,
Yet I remain, for I've sworn my yow.



#### Premonition

by Patt Demetri

When I'm off duty and you're on the ship, I move around restlessly, checking here, Visiting there. I've seen every Department in the entire academy lately. I wasn't always this restless but now, Waiting for you to finish your duty, I can't relax. I keep wanting to rush time. Dr. McCoy senses something but is too Tactful to quiz me very much. He Suggests exercise, swimming, but i'm Too keved up for any type of sport. I've had six cups of coffee in two hours. There are at least three hours to go. Even then you may stop by the labs Before joining me in my quarters. You mean so much to me, and I feel that We have so little time, anything could happen. Spock, please hurry -- send those cadets off To study or something. Come home to me. I need you now. I feel lost without you. I feel that we have so little time.

#### Reflection

by Patt Demetri

A son, full grown -
A man

Before I knew him,

Part of me lost, unknown.

I have missed the joys

Of fatherhood, instant love:

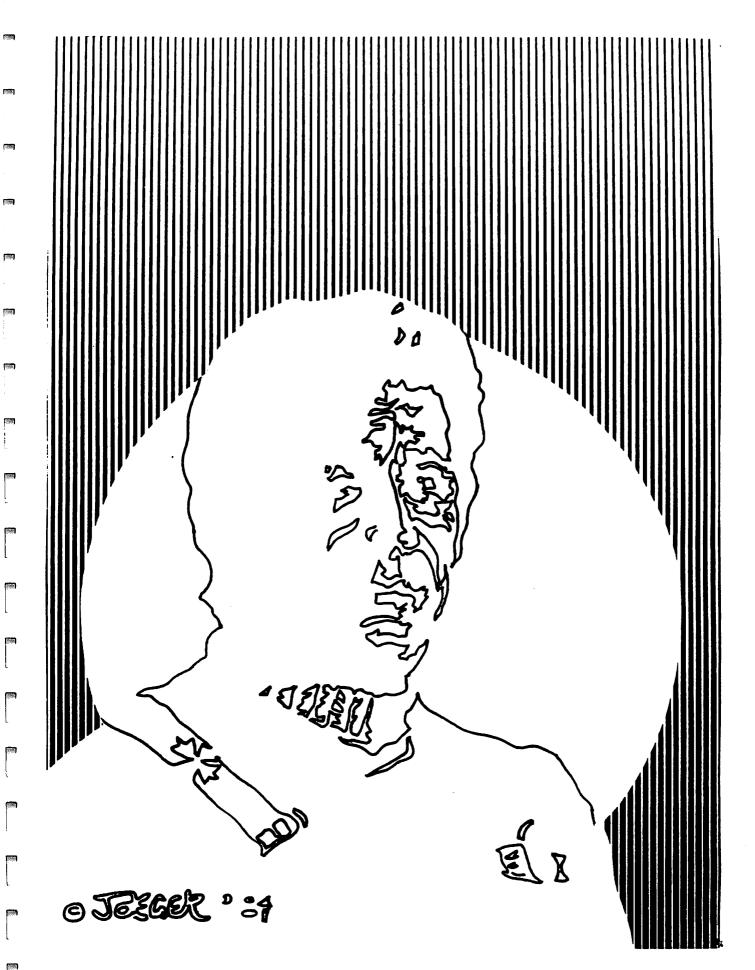
He is too old now to

Ever be my son;

Those years have been

Stolen from me.

My son, my son -
Let us at least be friends.



## Through the Link

by Denise S. Chonka

THE PAIN IS UNBEARABLE THE FINGERS CLUTCHED CLAW-LIKE SLAMMED AGAINST THE HARD SURFACE REACHING OUT WITH HIS MIND EYES NOT SEEING BUT KNOWING OUT THERE, SOMEONE WAITED --A LAST SALUTE HAND FORMING WEAKLY BREATH IN GASPS STRENGTH DRAINING WHISPERING "LIVE LONG AND PROSPER" DARKNESS COMES QUICKLY SINKING SLOWLY FORM SLUMPING ONE LAST RASP OF BREATH THE PAIN IS OVER

At her console, staring blankly eyes unfocused a tear slides down her cheek. "Leila, are you all right?" She slowly nods assent. How could she explain to them a part of her has just slipped into the darkness that is forever? She feels it, across all the parsecs, just as he felt the lives on the intrepid cease. They had loved, once, stolen a moment belonging to another; bonded and touching, as that moment shared by mates. "We shall meet again." Linked, however tenuously, his mind to hers, knowing it now, she accepts this final sacrifice of love he has made.

In mid-sentence, a shock wave of agony then nothingness. She pauses, unsure at first. She has not been ill -what was this, then? Of a sudden, she knows, and grief fills her. She could not show it a warrior does not cry. They had shared much. She had even told him her Tanemes, the secret name known only to family and lovers. She had suffered reprimand at what he had done. It was of no consequence. "Commander, are you ill?" Waving him off, head bowed, love for friend respect for enemy she accepts the warrior's death he has chosen.



## **Desolation**

by Allie Werhan

You remember
Loneliness.
You deny our agony.

We cannot be
As we imagined,
One

Against the enemy Until you recognize Our common pain.

What do you know Of blood And misery?

You hope
Always
That there will be

Another way Without grief And sorrow.

Here I wait in silence And endurance,

While you pretend That there will be

Tomorrow ...

The final act of love
Beyond the call of duty
Through the severed strands
Of life and breath
He paid final tribute
to his friend

They'd roamed the stars together
Inseparate, confederate
'Till now

And he gave back his friend's life
Without regret
Defining a deeper instinct
Than Human ... or Vulcan ....

### **Solitaire**

by V.L. Thorn

#### Please:

Take me home.

The silent halls await beyond the steps —
the steps of Mount Seleya.

Solemn figures moving in the russet dusk
make ready to perform the hallowed rites;

Perhaps a rite more ancient still: Take me home.

My friends, take me home.

Volcanic vapors glow in the last light, Softening the valleys, defining the familiar precipices.

When your human joy rekindles at the view, though never seen, And your human eyes weep alien tears, We will both find peace.

Take me home.

implore him: take me home.

#### Invocation

by Mikki Reynard

## Yesterday

by Patt Demetri

You keep coming back,
Walking through my life,
Constantly
Causing problems and
Making me remember
Yesterday,
Better times,
Love and laughter -You invade my dreams
With your insubstantial self,
And I awake, startled,
Confused,
Until I remember
Your death.

### A Little Death

by Lee E. Heller

A little death, I said,
not to worry.

I'll plant the corpse here.
Do you see

Life from death, something
from nothing?

#### I had not thought death had undone so many.

I am Patience, I
smile at grief—
I will build you
monuments.
There are flowers in my
garden of death

#### Where yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang

We are not one, we are not we—
atoms bounced and waitz away divided.

And that eternal, hidden is still unanswered.

#### Do not go gentle into that good night

No solace springs green in cold ground;
This is the cruellest month for philosophic minds
And souls so human that need to grieve.

And if awhile I think on thee, dear friend, Will losses be restored, and sorrows end?

# THE NEEDS OF THE MANY

It seems I have left the noblest part of mysclf back there, on that newborn planet.

Your son meant more to me than you can know. I'd have given my life, if it would've saved his.

... if there's even a chance that Spock has an eternal soul, then it's my responsibility... as surely as if it were my very own.

I'm going to tell you something that I never thought I'd hear myself say. It seems I've missed you. I don't know if I could stand to lose you again.

My God, Bones, what have I done? What you had to do. What you always do. Turn death into a fighting chance to live.



## **Tears and Laughter**

by Karen C. Hunter

T.O.Q. Spacedock 8245.7

Supply Officer Tessira n'ha Melora Starship <u>Endeavor</u> Quadrant G Sector XII

Dear Tess,

I am sitting here crying not knowing if my tears are happiness, sadness, or pure frustration. Spock is alive! Can you believe it? My captain is alive, my ship has been destroyed, and I am stuck here in spacedock.

When I wrote to you last, we had left Genesis and started toward Alpha Ceti V to pick up the survivors from Reliant. However, somewhere along the line we diverted back to Earth, (no one ever tells me why we do anything) and someone else got the pickup job. All along the way we kept losing trainees and cadets to other ships and bases, until almost no one was left on board. That was very peculiar. A ship built for a crew of over 500 feels very empty with only a couple dozen crew — the absolute minimum required to operate it normally. Grissom met us at Regulus and took Lt. Saavik and David Marcus back to Genesis as part of a science survey. I wanted to go with them very much, but that jerk Esteban only wanted "real" science officers — I think he'd have tried to leave David behind if Genesis weren't David's project — so just being a science supply officer carried no weight at all. (Speaking of David, had you heard yet that he is Kirk's son!? Well, well, well. The things our superiors have up their sleeves. Though when you think about Kirk and Carol, it makes a certain amount of sense even if she does have more brains than Kirk's usual women. Ooops. Now I'm being catty.)

Still, I found I was really needed on Enterprise. Somebody has to see to food, clothing, cleaning, etc, even for a skeleton crew. You should have seen me — running the galley, operating the clothes processors, inventorying anything not destroyed, and all with no help. Every damn one of my trainees got sent off. How they think even Enterprise can run without food and clothing is beyond me. So I kept on doing my little miracles for the few people left, though no one seemed to notice I even existed.

However, it was a good thing there was someone with some old fashioned common sense on this ship. Most of the crew were either biggies -- commanders all -- or a dozen very junior officers left to slave (with Lt. me stuck in the middle.) There wasn't anything much to do except worry about Starfleet Command, Spock, and Genesis. After losing everyone at Regulus, Kirk sort of pulled into a shell: very correct, very official, and very far away. Dr. McCoy worried about him at first (as well as being the only person

who talked to me) but after awhile he withdrew, too. I wasn't much surprised when he got stranger than anyone and broke into Spock's quarters just before we got back to Earth. Kirk had sealed the door after Saavik and I packed up, but the seal didn't stop McCoy. Kirk had to have him tranquilized and sent to Spacedock hospital.

Then we got the really bad news. They did not intend to repair Enterprise. Did you know they were planning to scuttle her? I had thought she was up for reassignment. No, very wrong. (Better watch out for your own ship. Endeavor is a sister of Enterprise. You're probably next on the list.)

Despite Kirk's pleas to be allowed to go back to Genesis, Morrow kept saying no. Finally he told us why. Enterprise was too old and out of date. Letting her be used as a training ship had been a favor to Kirk. Of course, Morrow couldn't wait and let that little bomb drop privately. He slapped Kirk with it at the final inspection. We were all standing there feeling pleased we were getting some extra leave (Scotty had promised Kirk he could be done with a refit in eight weeks, two if he pushed,) and Morrow crushed us all. We would all be reassigned. You should have seen the faces of the senior officers—incredible disbelief and shock.

To shove insult on top of injury, right beside us in Spacedock was the new tub, Excelsior. Tess, have you seen pictures of the new transwarp class ships? She's an ugly old boat. Basically all they've done is redesign the engineering hull to accommodate the new power system and patch it onto the same saucer hull and nacelles. It looks just terrible. (Besides, there's something wrong about her balance. The saucer doesn't look like it's on straight!) When you compare the grace and agility of Enterprise next to that lumbering, bloated bathtub, it's enough to make you sick. And I'm not the only one who thinks so. Scotty can't say anything nice — and he's supposed to be her Captain of Engineering. (What does that title mean?) I wish they'd asked him how to design a truly beautiful ship. He'd put love into the design along with the efficiency.

That probably sounds like sour grapes since I'm not on any ship at the moment, ugly or not. I am stuck here on Spacedock inventorying paperclips and uniforms. Being Chief of Supply for <a href="Enterprise">Enterprise</a> sure didn't last long. Sigh. No one here knows what to do with me -- a supply chief who's outranked by her junior officers. They can't downgrade me -- I don't deserve disciplinary action.



Well, at least they don't know I deserve it, and I sure as hell ain't goin' to tell 'em. (Yes, I know you want to hear the part about why Spock is alive. You've got to wait while I tell it in order.)

After we all trooped dejectedly off Enterprise, we were put in transient quarters, at least the officers. All the remaining kids disappeared on their leaves. I haven't been so alone since I first went up to the Academy, so I went out looking for Uhura to talk to. I couldn't find her or any of the senior officers. I was even willing to sit through dinner with Pavel if he'd talk to me. No good there, either. So I went to bed. Sometime after 2400 hours (or something equally dim) Spacedock got a yellow alert. All the communications were out, crazy channels on the coms when you tried to check in -- but I did manage to figure out somebody was stealing the Enterprise. I ran down to one of the lounges (in my nightie) and watched her back out and barge her way out the spacedoors, with Excelsion

gunning her engine in frustration (Scotty stole her sparkplugs or something.) I was furious — of course, Kirk had stolen her to go back to Genesis and they went without me. I should have known it and stayed on board. I went back to my room and threw things against the wall for half an hour, dumped them in the recycler, and started over. It cost a lot of credits and didn't even help. Shit, I was mad.

Now, the rest of this is confidential — strictly between-you-and-me stuff. If it gets out, I'm coming after you with a processor and you can be somebody's new leisure uniform.

Kirk had made a mistake in leaving Spock's body behind on Genesis. I am told that an essential part of Vulcan religion is that the body and soul must come at death to Mount Seleya. There is some mystical stuff I don't understand about Spock's spirit remaining there with his ancestors. What Spock had done at the last minute was to put his spirit in transient quarters, courtesy of Dr. McCoy: no wonder the doctor has gone all wonky on us. Kirk had to go back, collect Spock's body, and return everything so the Vulcan's could fix it up. Does that sound logical to you? It sounds like a lot of hokum to me. But Uhura swore that Ambassador Sarek thought it was important.



While I was still throwing stuff around my room, Uhura came in. She'd arranged to transport Kirk and company up to Enterprise and had boluxed up the spacedock coms (which figured.) Now she had to get out while the going was good and go to Vulcan with the Ambassador. What she needed was a cover. Security would be sure to be after her if they figured it out. What she needed me to do was take over the dimbulb job she'd been doing at the transport station until she could get away. I didn't see how that could work, but she had that fixed, too. The ensign she'd been working with worships her (or is terrified, I can't tell which.) So he isn't going to tell. She fixed the security coder to accept a fake ID she'd given me. So ever since then I've been doing my job all day and her job for second shift. No one seems to have figured it out. I fill the ensign with tales of life on Enterprise and we snooze behind the console. (He calls this station the, er, hind end of space.) Someday I fully expect to get sent to the most remote station in the federation to count rocks as I break them into gravel. But it's all been worth it, because now I know that Spock is alive.

When Kirk got back to Genesis, he was met by Klingons, a planet that had gone wild, and a reborn Spock. I don't know all the details yet, but in the process <a href="Enterprise">Enterprise</a> was destroyed (agony for me), David Marcus got killed (agony for Kirk), and Genesis self-destructed. Somehow they all got back to Vulcan with Spock — maybe someday I'll understand just why he was dead or whatever happened — and all that hokum about body and spirit got put to the test. The Vulcans put things right. Uhura sent me a message just now so I would know to stop carrying her shift, but I don't know if things are out of danger as far as their jobs are concerned. Let's face it — by stealing a ship, breaking McCoy out of detention (oh, yeah, I forgot to mention that,) sabotaging <a href="Excelsior">Excelsior</a>, losing <a href="Enterprise">Enterprise</a>, and utterly wiping out communications at Spacedock for about fifteen hours, they've pretty well ruined themselves with Starfleet Command.

Of course, Kirk is the Miracle Man. He always manages to bring success out of defeat, even when it takes awhile. I'm wondering just how he's going to manage this one. Granted, he does have a Klingon Bird of Prey (when did Klingons start using those? I thought only Romulans had them,) and a new generation cloaking device (ditto for that.) But is that enough to blackmail Nogura and Morrow into letting him have a new ship? I don't think even the pressure the Vulcans can give will manage that.

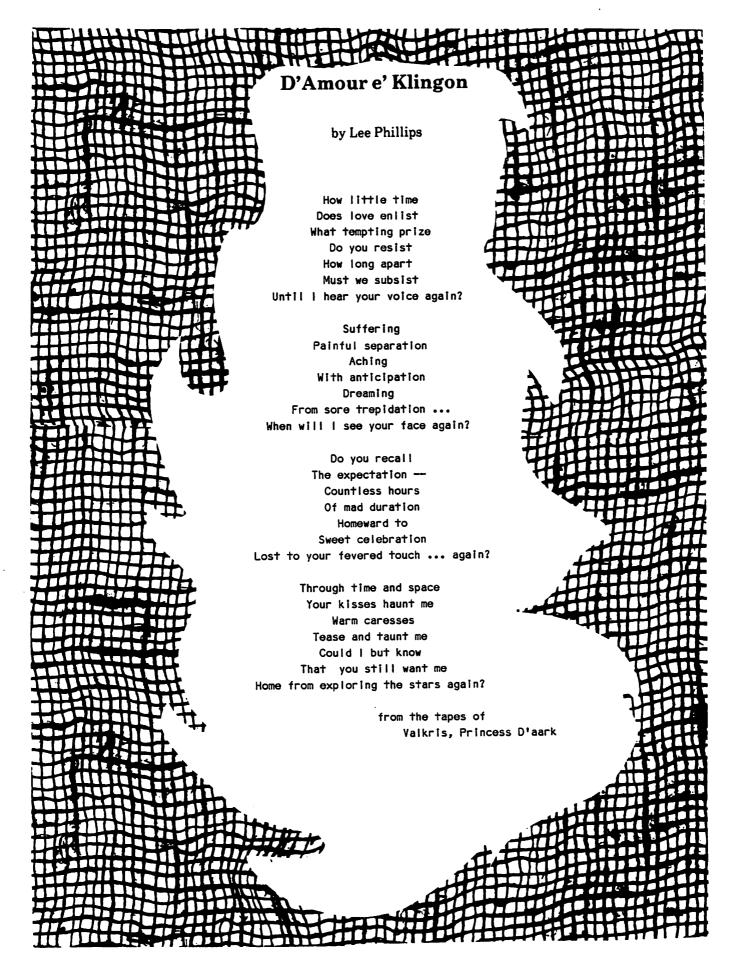
So, there it is. Tears, laughter, and complete frustration. I don't know what's next. I hope I hear something more from Uhura fairly soon, and I've decided to start studying Vulcan. All this

spirit business still sounds like nonsense, but if the Vulcans believe it (and it does work) it must be logical. And anyway, there's nothing much else to do in my humble supply room. I only hope that when Kirk gets everything all pulled back together again there will be some room for me, my ensign friend, and all the rest of the loyal hangers-on. I can't believe that even the loss of the Enterprise will hold him up for long.

I am going to go totally wonky myself, waiting. I'll write one way or the other.

Love, Teri **High Stakes** by Emily Ross What price would you not pay, that he should live? His mission, his survival, his command, All that he cherishes, lies in your hand; is there a ransom you would grudge to give? How high a wager, when the dice are tossed? Pride, pain and passion, and your own heart's blood, Your private feelings trampled in the mud, Your pose of cold, uncaring logic -- lost. Full fare will be exacted on that day; When you have weighed the options -- you will pay. What price would you not pay, that he should live? That he should stand, as ever, at your side, Your shield and confidante, your guard and guide; Is there a ransom you would grudge to give? What toll will be assessed, to find the lost? Your son, your ship, your oath, your whole career; All you and those who follow you hold dear Will be cried forfeit. Will you count the cost? Full fare will be exacted on that day; And when you face the moment -- you will pay.





He chose
an errand of subterfuge
and stealth

Empowered freely by imperial obsession

Tempered only by classified intent
shielding
the Federation possession:

The Genesis equation
the creation
of life
the power over
death

Kruge employed the ablest accessories at hand
at any price
delegation might demand
. Instead
he forged a deadly
confrontation
That would forever tip the scales
of federate security

However
his plan
had not included
grieving Human fury
Or a mutiny that cast
his own fiery epitaph
from deep within a former
starship captain's wrath ...

From the beginning
Kruge's mission had been charged
with secrecy
and haste
His command
composed new Klingon treachery
and hate
Soon to be
by Vulcan/Human loyalty
A fitting bitter eulogy
to Enterprise's fate ...

### **Agent Provocateur**

by V. L. Thorn

Nevertheless
he held
the upper hand
Until his Federation prisoners
refused
to cooperate
And a duel to the death
beat a briefly discordant
counterpoint
To an altered Vulcan's state ...

The Klingon's uncompromising immolation
was antithesis
at best
An unrepentent lifetime
passed
with unremarkable regrets

Before he met the molten mass exploding from the planet's heaving depth One haunted whispered plea became his monument his final breath ...

VALKRIS!





### **Final Option**

by Debbie Gilbert

"Which do you want, Jimmy --Vanilla or chocolate?" she asked. Daring, I piped, "Both!" She laughed, and gave me some of each.

Later, at the Academy,
I met my nemesis:

Kobayashi Maru, a non-win fiasco
In which every path chosen
Was the wrong one.
That didn't sit well with me;
I changed the rules — and won.
Other cadets shook their heads:
"That Kirk leads a charmed life;
He has his cake and eats it, too."

Now, finally, comes a test I cannot win;
Each option demands a cutting price.
The petulant child within me whines,
"But I want to have them both!"

"For Christ's sake," I reply,
"You're fifty years old now —
High time for you to grow up!"

So -- which do I chose:

For so many years
The focus of my desires,
My raison d'etre?

or,

"The noblest part of myself,"
Once lost to me,
Now again within reach?

Weighing the facts
Without sentiment,
Without selfishness,
Yet in full conscience,
I strike a painful balance
And find but one true course.

Taking a deep breath, I make my decision

And cross the threshold, Leaving childhood behind.



# The Needs of the One

by Barbara J. Yanosko

A good maxim: "Let sleeping dogs lie."

But you give me friendship, loyalty, perspective,
admiration, support, love

For the little I have to give in return,

And I need what you have to give to nourish my soul.

I can't let you lie,
So I trade ship, federation, and honor
For the chance to have you by my side.
I wonder who is master.







### The Childlost

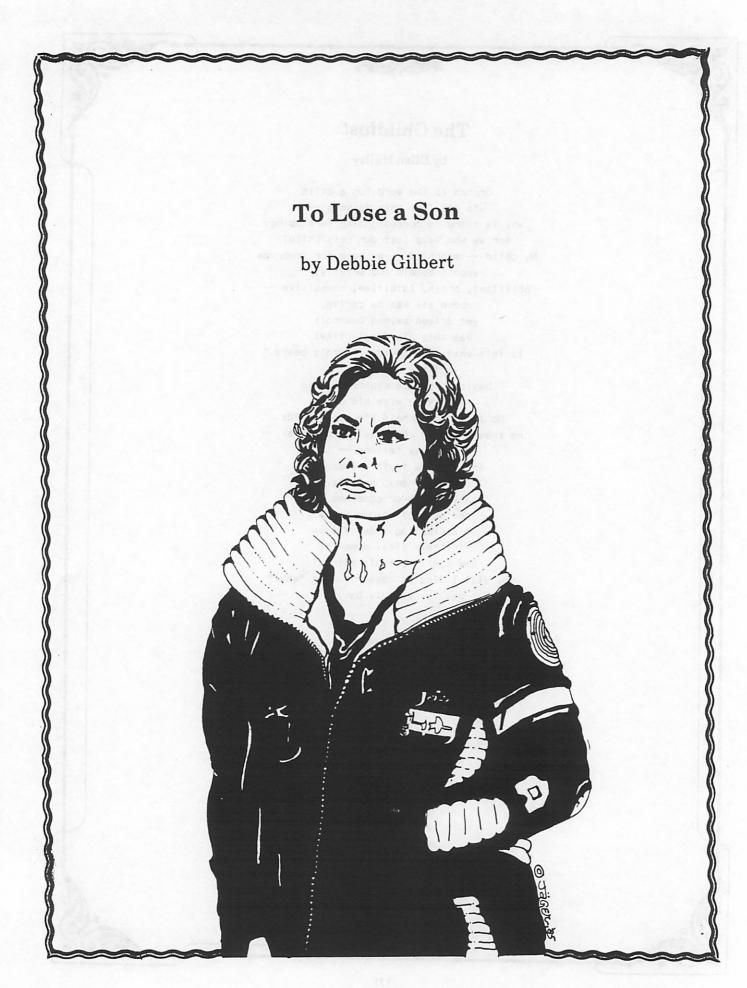
by Ellen Hulley

Orphan is the word for a child who has lost both parents -why is there no corresponding terminology for we who have lost our only child? My child -- manchild -- my hope for tomorrow whom I beheld too briefly; brilliant, brash, intuitive, compulsive -above all was he caring, yet driven beyond control: Was this his tragic flaw? Is this what led him to a "hero's death," a final sacrifice, buying others a chance at life by paying with his own? No loving arms held him at the end; he knew only the cold reality of steel -so they tell me -the vicious truth driven home by my enemy, not his. Why am I ever condemned, denied that meager peace of comforting those I love in their final moments? How can I tell his mother? How will I find an answer to her "why?" Why ... why ... David!

#### Lost

by Patt Demetri

My son,
Too late found —
I have no memories
Of your childhood
To sustain me,
No happy times
To hold close
And cherish,
No tears
For me to comfort.
My son —
Lost,
Never found.



TRANS-SYSTEM POSTAL NETWORK -- SUBSPACE COMMUNICATIONS -- STARDATE 8263.4
TO: Admiral James T. Kirk, c/o Earth Embassy, VULCAN
FROM: Dr. Carol Marcus, Consolidated BioResearch, Ontario Sector, State of Canada, EARTH

Dear Jim:

When you called the other day, I said a lot of things in anger that I've since been having second thoughts about. I'm trying now to take a few deep breaths and be rational about all of this. My spirit is feeling bruised from being battered around by conflicting emotions, and I know I won't rest tonight until I've unburdened myself to you.

As soon as I saw your face on the viewscreen that day, I knew. Words were unnecessary; the message was clear from your expression. I found myself nodding in resignation as you voiced what I had heard so often in my dreams — my nightmares. I reacted to your news not with shock, nor dismay, but instead with bitter resentment, righteous anger, and even hatred. I could not suppress the childish urge to say, "I told you so!"

But I will say it again, one more time, in hopes that I might purge all remaining hostility, and my anger might be over and done with: "I told you this would happen. I knew it would — that's why I kept him with me, to prevent him from chasing trhough the universe with his father. But I couldn't protect him forever — couldn't postpone the inevitable, so one day he does meet up with dear old dad, and the very first chance they get they go off together, gallivanting around the galaxy on a high-risk mission — he a greenhorn spacer with absolutely no Starfleet training; you a middle-aged brass whose top priority is showing yourself in the best possible light — and he is killed. Dead. Permanent. Add that to your body count, Admiral! After all, what did you expect? Did you think that it was all a game, that Genesis was his toy to play with? As long as he met his death on a Starfleet mission, then that was okay with you, right?

There, I've said it. This time my voice is steadier, my hands don't tremble quite so much. Reason has penetrated the blind haze of rage (I am, after all, a scientist), and I can see that I have not been entirely fair with you. I've been trying to examine exactly why I am angry with you. For fathering him (fathering in the sense of providing your semen and not in the act of parenting)? No; I was the one who "accidentally" neglected the birth control. For walking out of our lives and denying us a complete family? No; I was the one who insisted that you leave. For being an ambitious man pursuing a military career? No; you can't change what you are, and if I didn't want to accept you as you were then I should have fallen in love with somebody else. For influencing him and changing his negative opinion of Starfleet? Maybe; as long as he wanted nothing to do with the military, I felt safe, knowing that he was safe. For taking him away from me and trying to make him follow in your footsteps? Yes! That was what I had been afraid of all those years. But wait — did you actually do such a thing? Did you say, "Come with me, son — let's ignore your mother's wishes and make her unhappy"? Of course not!

Only with his death have I finally been made to face the fact that he is not my little boy anymore; he is — was — an adult, and whatever decisions he made were his to make. He alone was responsible for the consequences. You didn't force him to go on that Genesis mission; he asked to go — he practically begged it of you. And he was motivated, i'm certain, by genuine scientific curiosity, not by an urge to be "just like Daddy." I've always considered my self an independent, enlightened, contemporary sort of person — qualities I felt I shared with my son. He wasn't a "mama's boy" at all; we each had our own lives to lead. And yet, some part of me was unwilling to let him go, and I didn't realize this until it was too late. Instead of us being weaned away from each other, gently and gradually, the bond between us has been rudely snapped and can never be repaired.

I thought I knew my son. I didn't, not completely. If what your Saavik says is true — and I'm told that Vulcans are incapable of lying — then David has committed a serious breach of ethics. (Oh my God ... do you realize that this is the first time I've been able to say his name? The word still cuts me like a knife.) Had both David and the Genesis planet survived, the issue would have come to light eventually, creating a scandal within the scientific community. There would have been an investigation, and David might even have been ostracized by his colleagues. But he is dead, and Genesis is no more, and I would prefer that his action be kept secret. I'm not defending what he did; it was wrong, and if he were here I'd give him the adult equivalent of a good spanking. But he's more than paid for his error, and I see no point in staining his memory.

Aside from his one mistake, he was an exemplary scientist, though his very enthusiasm for his work at times made him headstrong and impetuous. Just like you. "There's a piece of evidence for the nature/nurture argument -- a son behaving like the father he had never even met.) In short, David was brilliant,

and I'm not just saying that out of maternal pride. It is heartbreaking to think that his life was ended so early, long before he had a chance to become mature in his career and demonstrate what he was capable of.

You tried to console me by pointing out that he died in order to save others. I felt (and still feel) that I would much rather have a living son than a dead hero. But when I started thinking about it, I realized how appropriate it was that he gave his life in order to preserve life, for he was a biologist, and life was his overwhelming concern (just as it is mine). You speculated that there may have been some element of remorse and atonement in his sacrifice. Knowing David as I do, I would tend to agree. I think that sooner or later he would have been unable to live with the guilt, and he would have come to me and confessed, and said, "I am truly sorry, Mother — what can I do to keep Genesis from harming anyone else?" I would have been furious and disappointed with him, but in time I would have forgiven him, and he would have understood this. I only regret that I had to learn of his mistake secondhand, instead of hearing it from David himself.

I could go on talking about him (though it hurts to do so, the more I do it the easier it gets), but this letter was not intended to be a eulogy. There will be time enough for that at the funeral on Thursday. The memorial service will be attended by David's many friends and colleagues from the Science Academy, from CBR, and by the members of the Genesis development team who were lucky enough not to have been stationed on Regula. (It occurs to me that David escaped Khan's mad rampage on Regula only to die a few months later at the hands of a mad Klingon. Could it be that he was destined to live long enough to meet his father — that fate was determined not to let him leave this world until he had come to know the man who had sired him? Again I wonder, as I often wondered while David was growing up, if I was really doing the right thing in keeping him from you.)

I'm sorry ... I seem to be just rambling on ... grief does weird things to the mind. It hurts, Jim, it really does. And though I'd thought myself free of you, I now find myself wishing for your strong shoulder to cry on. I had assumed you could never understand how I feel, but then I tried looking at everything from your point of view, and saw that what you're feeling might be just as painful. It must seem that God is playing a cruel game with you — to suddenly bestow upon you a beautiful, full-grown son, to let you start to become acquainted, to let the first seeds of love begin to sprout — and then to abruptly snatch him away from you. Maybe you would have been better off if you had never known David at all.

But I am richer for having known him. For twenty years, his life was inextricably intertwined with mine, and now that he is gone there are gaping holes in the fabric of my soul. I wish you could be here, Jim, to help fill some of this emptiness. I realize, of course, that you probably can't make the funeral; Starfleet wants your head on a platter, and as long as you remain on Vulcan you have diplomatic immunity. Nevertheless, he was your son, and if you couldn't be his father in life, you can at least be his father in death. I'm not begging you to come, Jim. All I ask is that you keep us in your thoughts, and if you believe in a God, pray for us.

I don't know if I'm going to stay here at CBR after the funeral. I may take a leave of absence and stay indefinitely on some tranquil, out-of-the-way planet. It's going to take me a long time to work through this thing, and I just need to think, to reassess where my life is going. I will let you know where I'll be, and if you decide to join me for awhile, I won't turn you away.

Again, I'm sorry for the hateful things I said. I simply needed someone to blame. David is gone
-- nothing I say or do will bring him back, and I must accept that. I think perhaps that writing this
letter has helped somewhat, and I hope you feel strongly enough to respond in kind. If we can bring everything out into the open, maybe we can get on with our lives in clear conscience.

Take care, Jim.

Remembering him with love,

Carol

# In the Garden of Thought

by Denise S. Chonka and Donna Frost



Sitting in the shade like this was a comfort — it was almost like being home. If it weren't for the 120 degree temperature, he might be able to close his eyes and imagine he was in Georgia.

Home.

His heart sank. He'd probably never see glowing red clay or moss-covered oak trees again. Odd how he never gave going home much thought, until now when it seemed he'd be denied the privilege.

Leonard McCoy straightened up and shook himself out of the reverie. After all, the purpose of his escape to the Garden of Thought at Sarek and Amanda's home in ShiKahr was to deal with his thoughts. He really should be elated, as Jim was, but there existed a dark and empty space inside him that he could neither fill nor banish.

Escape to the garden offered a chance to deal with that void. He wasn't quite sure why he knew about this place, as he'd only been to Vulcan a few times, and really wasn't that familiar with customs here. At the conclusion of the fal-tor-pan he had accepted Lady Amanda's gracious offer to stay at the family residence, and spent a great deal of time wandering the grounds. This secluded spot gave him a special feeling when he'd stumbled on it, and somehow knew that here among the flowers and shrubs that had been imported from Earth he would not be disturbed.

Now, how did it go? Oh, yes ... clear your mind ... cleanse all troublesome thoughts, one by one show them to yourself, face them, and put them away.

Breathing deeply, eyes closed against the Vulcan sun, McCoy slipped into the first level of meditation taught to all Vulcan children.

Unbidden, the thoughts washed over him, flooding his mind, causing him to gasp.

Control ... I must have control!

A slight shift in position and the breathing exercises helped to reshape the trance.

"I do not have time to discuss this logically, Doctor ... remember ...."

Now, how on Terra did he know that? He'd been out cold at the time, the recipient of a Vulcan nerve pinch. The sensation was one of observing events from outside himself.

"He really isn't dead, as long as we remember him."

What a look Jim gave him! He wanted to cry, scream, anything to make Jim understand. Why wasn't the admiral upset? Something was wrong. Maybe it was just fatigue, or the haunting strains of "Amazing Grace" that had vividly reminded McCoy of his own father's funeral.

Perhaps it was the guilt. He should have known what Spock intended to do with that little diversion. "What is Mr. Scott's condition?"

Where the hell was Jim? He must have known what was going on -- weren't they linked? McCoy had seen it before, their ability to sense each other's peril.

Shields. Yes, that was it! Spock shielded his mind, so Jim wouldn't know!

"The needs of the many ...."

But McCoy had feit the pain, the urgency, the sadness in Spock's actions, and only he knew the reason why.

On the way back to Earth there had been an increasing number of blackout episodes. The nightmares he was having made him break out in a cold sweat, even now. Scenes in the reactor room, then Spock calling to him to "take me home ....! must return to Mount Seleya ... help me ...."

Even in full consciousness, he was saying and doing things he never would have, were he in his right mind. When Kirk told him what had happened in Spock's quarters as they approached Spacedock, he thought the admiral was losing his mind.

Trying to hire a ship from that pirate, now that <u>was</u> crazy! But then, it really wasn't him, was it. The funniest part was the memory of trying to knock out the Federation Security man with the nerve pinch!

What ever gave me the idea that it would work, especially since it never had before? I had trouble enough with the Vulcan salute.

"You're suffering from a Vulcan mind meld, Doctor."

Why that green-blooded son of a bitch!

That explained everything. No wonder he couldn't remember half of what he'd been doing — half of him wasn't McCoy, it was Spock.

Once they were safely on board the Enterprise and warping towards the Genesis planet he could turn his thoughts inward. At last, he found the presence that was the cause of his recent unrest. Interesting — interesting — he'd never been much of a meditator before, and yet searching the recesses of his mind was so easy now. He could almost touch the essence that was not his, warm and living, not at all what he'd imagined it would be.

"... and someone else ... a Vulcan scientist of your acquaintance. He is not himself, but he lives."

The internal shock of seeing Spock's body alive but unaware on Genesis was almost too much for McCoy's fragile Human psyche to bear. The Spock part of him tried to remain cool and collected, but the unbridled joy was overwhelming. He concentrated his whole being on examining the body.

"It seems, Admiral, that I've got all his marbles."

As Saavik's arm brushed past McCoy's he felt a rush of unguarded impulses from her mind, and she recoiled in shock. She knew! She could feel her mentor's essence in him. His own mind raced in an attempt to assimilate the images from hers.

Pon farr? Of course, due to the aging process, it would have been necessary but ....

A mental raising of an eyebrow startled him.

Yes, Spock, it is fascinating. Yes, it does present a dilemma, since it was your body she saved.

But you weren't really in there. Where do you separate flesh from soul? We'll have to take this up with the Elders upon our return to Vulcan.

Wait a minute. Did I say we? Since when am I involved? Except, of course, unless your body's pon farr has elicited the usual Vulcan female physiological responses. It's been as long time since I've practiced obstetrics, you know. And don't you raise both those eyebrows at me! This may be fascinating after all ....

Through all the ordeal he had kept the Katra safe, holding on for dear life when it seemed to fade, so afraid it would disappear forever. Please, don't lethis soul die, not now that we've come so far!
"I don't know if I could stand to lose you again."

The thoughts came faster now. The arrival on Vulcan in the Bird of Prey ... so hot ... Uhura tearfully hugging the admiral ... I'm losing him! Where is he? I can't feel him!

"Who is the keeper of the Katra?"

"I am. McCoy, Leonard H, son of David" ... "I choose the danger ... hell of a time to ask" ... probing into his mind ... fading in and out ... panic .... Can't some of his knowledge remain? With that computerized brain, and my medical skills, what a surgeon we'd be ... can't let go ... Spock! Talk to me! Don't leave me! ... taking so long ... overpowering thirst and exhaustion .... Did I fall asleep? I don't remember ... the sound of the gong ... Sarek reaching to him, helping him down the stairs ...

McCoy breathed deeply. Well, he'd faced the whole thing all over again, so why did he still feel uneasy? Something was missing inside. His thought turned abruptly to Christine. Poor Chris! She knew of Spock's death — bad news traveled fast. He didn't have a chance to talk to her, comfort her while on Earth. He imagined that she was devastated.

He could use her help right now, though. Chris had shared Spock's essence once, when Henoch had taken control of Spock's body. She had suffered so when the fusion was broken. Maybe she could have helped him deal with this same emptiness. McCoy wondered if she'd felt the same awe and wonder at Spock's Katra as he did.

This is useless! Who the hell's bright idea is this purge, anyways? It certainly couldn't have

The best solution should have been to get a few stiff drinks under his belt and torget these things, not dredge them up and relive them.

That Vulcan must have left his !ily-white ideas of propriety behind to haunt me. Thanks a lot, Spock. I can't even drink to forget whatever it is that still hurts.

No, try again, delve deeper, let it surface of its own accord.

McCoy leaned back obediently, cleared his mind, and sat perfectly still. Slower now, the images came up from the vaults of his mind to face him.

Spock walked down the steps, looking right past them. Jim looked so hurt, as he whispered, "Live long and prosper, my friend."

Spock turned, looking them all over. Smiles of encouragement greeted the inquisitive gaze. But it was Kirk who jogged the memories.

"Jim ... your name is Jim ...."

The Vulcan turned to look at them all again, and McCoy tapped his forehead to remind Spock who it was who had kept him safe.

Why did he feel so cold, so empty? Even gathering around him, Spock was untouchable to all but Jim's stare. They stood facing each other, awareness lighting Spock's eyes, tears clouding Kirk's.

What about me?

There it was! This was the remaining pain. All he'd been through for these men, the pain the fear, the near hysteria. And yet, like before, it was Jim and Spock. Well, now, that hurt.

I saved your life, you unfeeling robot! And this is my thanks. All these years I've been the outsider, and after all this, I still am. What do I have to do? I love you both. Look at me!

Worse than all that had gone before, the loneliness he now felt consumed him. His body racked with sobs as he slumped forward to cover his face with his hands.

He had nothing now. No homeworld. No <u>Enterprise</u>. He was a criminal in the eyes of Starfleet. And he still was no closer to the two people who meant the most to him in the whole galaxy.

Jealousy! He never thought he'd feel it. It radiated from him, threatening to engulf all around him.

No! No! Let it loose, face it, deal with it! But I can't! Not yet. Help me!!

The trance deepened slightly, allowing him to fall into the Vulcan method of assimilating that which cannot yet be resolved. His mind carried the pain out, dispersed it, and left the anger and jealousy in the shadows. A small smile crossed his face. What was it he'd read in that twentieth century vidtape novel? "I'll think about it tomorrow .... Tomorrow is another day."

Voices nearby caused him to surface from his meditative state.

"How long has he been in there?"

"Six point two three hours, FST, Admiral."

"I know I can't go in there, but something's wrong; I feel it."

McCoy rose, and walked towards Kirk and Sarek. Jim knew he was there, and that McCoy was troubled. A wonderful suspicion crept into his mind.

"Bones, I was sitting with Spock, and all of a sudden I got the impression that you were in pain. But you couldn't have been, because you're here and you're all right. I don't understand it."

McCoy just smiled.

Yes, Jim, there had been pain. And I know how you knew it. Spock, thank you. You taught me well while you were in here, didn't you? And you answered my plea. You didn't leave me -- not completely.

He reached along the gossamer-thin thread that bound his soul and mind to Spock and through him to Jim, and passed along his new-found peace of mind.

McCoy threw his arm around Jim's shoulders as they walked with Sarek back to the house.

Spock, you fake, you know Human emotions better than you'll ever admit. Thank you, my friend, my .. what was that word you left me? Oh yes .. my T'hy'la.

In the house beyond, just for an instant, Spock's rigid Vulcan mind permitted a smile.



Exotic home, transcendent place,
Where once you paused to mediate,
To fathom if you could,
The strange illogic Human race.



In Vulcan torpor, lost to care,
Alien as the farth'rest star,
Motionless, you wait.

So Death, in searching, finds you here.

### **Vulcan Transition**

I reach, though Human touch is frail.

My offer's love, abiding strong.

Always you have been

My anchor, rock and sacred grail.

by Allie Werhan

These other mimic what I do,
Grasping not the truth I know.
Buried deep in death,
My being still depends on you.

☆

Bright the light that lets me see

Life borne from death, and peace from pain.

Incredulous, you peer,

And lift that skeptic brow at me.

☆



### **ALTERNATE VISIONS**

other dimensions... higher levels of being... the existence of which cannot be proven logically.

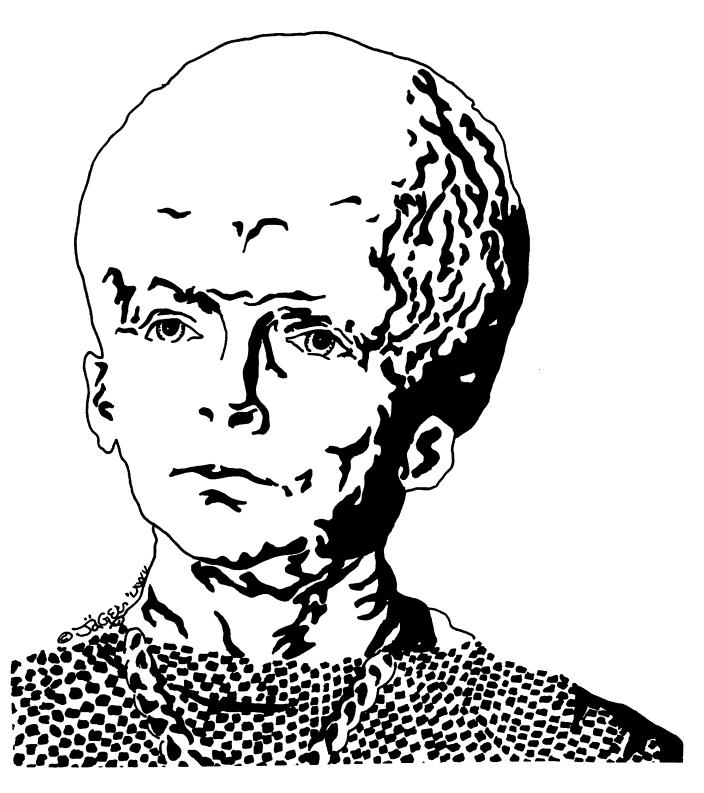
time if fluid ... like a river with currents, eddies, backwash.

in a different reality, i could have called you friend.

there are always alternatives.

## Mudd's Menagerie

by Stephen Mendenhall



The starship Entreprenise, a privately owned ship which consisted of a sphere, a tube, and a pair of warp drive engines, had been sold to one Harcourt Fenton Mudd, some time in the middle of the Iwenty-third century.

Eighteen light years from Talos IV, Joe Garison noticed a blip on his console. He turned to the man sitting on the left side of the captain's console: the famous -- or infamous -- Harry Mudd.

"Harry, I'm getting something over the navigation beam -- an old style radio signal."

Abel Hanson, manning the communications console, said, "I'm getting it, too -- being printed out now."

Spxyx, the Vulcan at the science console, pulled the printout from the slot and perused it. He said, "It's from the SS <u>Columbia</u>, a ship launched eighteen years ago. Food and water obtainable, but unless — message breaks off at that point."

"Nothing else? I don't think it's worth bothering about them. Let those do-gooder Feds handle it. We've got Rigellian furs and food to unload. Stay on course to the Fomalhaut Colony." Harry stood up and said, "I'm goin' to the bar. Drake, you have the chair."

Madeline Drake, a tall, dark, siender woman who could have been anywhere in age from twenty-one to fifty-nine modded loftily and sat down in Harry's chair.

Harry went through the wooden double doors. Beyond them was a stairway with an oriental rug covering the pseudo-wooden steps. This led to the lounge where he saw Leo Francis Walsh behind the bar, as fat as Harry, dressed in gaudy imitation Western wear, Saurian brandy in one hand, 3-D videogame in the other, a lovely barmaid at his side; she was beating him.

Harry sat down on his personal bar stool, proportioned to fit his ample exterior.

Leo said, "Talk is we ran across a radio signal." News got around the ship fast.

The barmaid went to wash the glasses. Harry frowned. "Nothing worth checking on. Getting the loot unloaded is more important. Whaddaya think?"

"Oh, I agree," Leo said, nodding. He poured Harry's usual, Saurian brandy with thin slices of Kaferian apple, the concoction fizzing and overflowing. Leo pushed the mug forward, then reached under the counter for something.

Harry took the mug and drank. We'll unload the stuff at Fomalhaut, then -- what's with the stethe-scope?"

Leo grinned. "Sometimes there are things a guy'll tell his doctor he'd never tall his bartender."
"I think you've got that backwards." Harry took another gulp.

"You've been moodier than usual, ever since we made it back from Rigel VII," Leo said.

"Getting sacked by a female warrior is not my idea of fun."

Leo poured himself a Dogbird Special. "And is there anything you personally could have done to prevent it?"

Harry fished a piece of apple out of the mug and chewed it. "Oh, I should have known something was fishy when I saw those big macho warriors with papooses."

"Y'know, for a Starfleet reject you certainly set high standards for yourself. How were you to know the native women looked like men and the men looked like women?"

"You're a fine one to talk. You didn't exactly earn a degree at Starfleet Medical--"

"Starfleet Medical School has nothing to do with this," Leo interrupted. "You end up wanting so much, you set standards for yourself nobody could mee. And now you're tired and--"

"Darn right I'm tired," Harry said. "I'm tired of being held responsible for twenty-three lives, deciding which scams are too risky and which aren't, who takes the risks and who doesn't, who gets rich and --- who goes to jail."

"Getting a conscience in your old age?" Leo said with mild surprise. "Fascinating, as Spxyx would say. So are you finally going to take my advice and take a vacation?"

"Not just a vacation. I'm thinking of quitting."

"And do what?" Leo asked skeptically.

"Well, for one thing, go home. Nice big parks, fifty miles of city on every side. Remember I told you about the two eelbirds I inherited? Tangler and Wrangler?"

Leo nodded. "Sounds exciting: nice picnics every day. Getting saddlesores from riding eelbirds. Better than any scam you and I ever pulled."

Harry gulped down the last of the drink. "I said that's just one possibility. I might get a legitimate business on Typeria, or get some nice desk job in Starfleet."

Leo tried to stifle a laugh. "Hoo! You a Starfleet official, dealing with diplomats, presidents!" He slapped his hand on the counter. "I think you've had enough to drink, Harry."

"The point is, there's a whole galaxy of things to choose from."

"Not for you," Leo said. "A man either lives life as it comes to him, or he keels over and dies. How many dozen times have you told me that?"

"A total of once, I think," Harry said. "But thanks. Now you're talking like a doctor -- bartender." Leo grinned and nodded. "We both get the same two kinds of customers -- the sick -- and the well."

Harry was about to frame a reply when the intercom bleeped; it was Drake. "We just got another message from Talos IV -- there are survivors down there -- and they've got themselves a pergium mine!"

A little while later Harry left the ship in care of Drake an entrepreneurial type who was always examining likely-looking planets— from a safe distance. She and Harry were always willing to cooperate, since they knew Certain Things about each other. Under her was Yeoman Joanna Moreau, who despite a strip queen figure a uniform couldn't hide, was considered very efficient — almost good enough for Starfleet, which she was thinking of joining eventually. Spxyx would have been next in line, but always got into heated arguments with Drake.

The landing party beamed down at the bend of a canyon, near the specks of light which indicated where the Columbia had crashed.

Harry Mudd, Leo Walsh, Garison, and Spxyx walked around taking pictures and smelling the flowers. Spxyx spent some time playing popular Vulcan tunes on the leaves of a plant which emitted various pure tones when touched.

Finally they found the encampment, a rude collection of cabins constructed out of the debris from the starship.

One of the old men in the clearing looked up and saw them, and froze, disbelieving. Finally he whispered hoarsely, "Look!"

The others looked up. "They're men! Humans!"

More survivors came out of the cabins and gathered around. The youngest looked about fifty, but they all looked neatly groomed and in good health.

Harry stepped forward, extending a hand. "Harry Mudd, of the starship Entreprenise."



One of the survivors extended a hand, shaking. He was overcome with emotion; finally he said, "Dr. Theodore Haskins, American Continental Institute."

"I'm Willy Winter!" another man said. "You're all men! I can't believe it. No women?"
"Uh, back on the ship," Harry said.

"You're taking us back, finally!" another survivor said. "You are, aren't you? Same old Earth?"
Harry shook his head. "No, 'fraid not. We can take you back, but it's changed quite a bit, what
with contact with other races --"

Garison said, "And you can't believe how fast you can get back! The time barrier's been broken! Our new ships have the warp drive, developed at the Alpha Centauri colonies, and --"

Leo nudged him. "I see they've got one lady here," he said.

Garison shrugged. "She's not my type -- I'm gay." He left with Winter and Haskins as the others gathered around the woman who had just come out of a hut. She was petite, blonde, and looked amazingly good, especially considering that she'd been the only woman among fifty men for eighteen years.

One of the men said, "This is Vina Hudson. Her parents were killed almost as we crashed."

There were introductions all around. Finally Harry said, "All right, collect your stuff and we can get back to the ship as soon as we take a look at that pergium mine you guys have."

"We don't have anything we feel like taking," somebody said.

Vina said, "I can show you the pergium."

Harry took her arm and said, "Fine! Which direction?" He gave a smile meant to be charming, but only succeeded in looking greedy.

She led him to a rocky knoll and up a slope. "See? Here, and here." But all Harry saw was ordinary sandstone, and none of the sparkling blue crystals of pergium oxide. "Where is it? I don't see any here."

"You will ," she said, her voice changing. "You're a perfect choice."

Harry looked up sharply. Suddenly the cliff opened, two aliens came out, and one of them pointed a rod at him. He fell in an unconscious heap.

The survivors and their camp vanished. "Harry!" Leo yelled, running for the cliff, but stopped when he saw the cliff face closing. "No pergium" he muttered. He pulled out a communicator to tell Drake what had happened.

Harry woke up on the floor. Looking around, he saw that the room had three bare walls, but there

didn't seem to be a fourth wall! Excitedly he got to his feet and ran toward the opening -- and bounced back to fall flat on his back.

"It appears, Magistrate, that we have a specimen of limited intelligence," said a faintly feminine voice.

"This is to be expected," said a second voice, "since it was lured here so easily."

Harry sat up on the floor. His head hurt. He noticed something peculiar about the aliens. "You're talking without moving your lips."

"You will note its unfamiliarity with simple telepathy."

"I know about telepathy," Harry said. "Now I'm warning you ---"

"It will now boast of its ship, crew, weaponry, and so on."

"No, I won't," Harry replied. "You know about that from reading my mind."

The alien frowned, displeased that her predictions were not being properly carried out.

The other alien said, "Thousands of us are already probing the creature's thoughts, Magistrate. We find excellent memory capacity. I read most strongly a recent struggle in which it fought to protect its loot. We will begin with this, giving it something more interesting to protect."

Harry wondered what they had in himd. He could hardly imagine anything more interesting than the loot he'd gotten from Rigel VII.



In the Entreprenise briefing room, Spxyx was saying, "Obviously, without a lot of plant and animal life on the surface, the inhabitants live deep underground, making whatever they need there."

Drake said, "I enjoy hearing you rehash the obvious, Spxyx. Now, what are we going to do about Harry?"

Leo said, "I'd like to point out that they can make us see anything they want us to see. So we'd better be darn careful."

Garison said, "We haven't delivered that phaser cannon to Gav yet. We could transmit the ship's power and blast a new entrance in the cliff.

"And how will we know when we've broken through, with them adjusting our minds?" Leo asked.

Garison quickly replied, "Easy. Well, uh, they had to trick us here instead of just fiddling with the engines, so, I don't think, uh, they can't do anything to keep us from trying to walk into a hole we don't see -- do you see?"

Leo looked skeptical, Spxyx looked upward, Drake looked at her fingernails. Finally Garison said, "Well, Harry's the only one who knows the combination to the safe in his cabin, so if we don't get him back --"

Drake instantly made her choice. She pressed the intercom button and said, "Phaser crew, stand by."



Meanwhile, Harry was looking at the scene around him -- a nice garden path to a huge castle, a lake to the left reflecting a gigantic moon. He heard someone. "Come. Hurry!"

He turned to see a cute blond in a peasant outfit. She pointed to the castle and said, "There will be weapons, perhaps loot. We must hide ourselves." It was Vina!

"Rigel VII," Harry said. "So they're funnin' with me memories, are they?"

"Come! Quickly! The Kalar is coming!"

"This is just another illusion -- they're making me relive this just the way it was -- except for you again. You were at that camp -- why did they bring you back?"

Vina put a hand on her hip. "The Kalar is coming to get you, and you complain because you've already seen me! Very flattering!"

"Well, I -- Harry began, and saw the Kalar coming up the path. She was a huge, Neanderthoid warrior dressed in heavy scales and fur. She had a sword in one hand, a shield in the other.

Harry ran to the castle, Vina following him. They made it inside just as Harry closed the door, setting a wooden bar. There were many weapons scattered around, but nothing Harry thought was worth keeping. But then at the top of the stairs, he saw a statue he'd seen before. It was a stone idol, made from light volcanic pumice. Harry went up the stairs to inspect it closely — he hadn't had a chance to previously. The base was eroded, and it looked like it could be easily tipped over. The door crashed open, and the Kalar roared as she saw Harry.

Harry suddenly froze, scared. "N-now look here," I'm really sorry I sold that sword to your husband --"
Obviously the Kalar wasn't listening. She walked slowly up the steps. Harry stood behind the stone

idol, and as soon as the Kalar got close enough, he shoved as hard as he could. It tipped over, she lost her footing, fell off the edge of the stairs, and landed in a crumpled heap, her neck obviously broken.

Harry took a deep breath, and found himself back in the cell. Vina put her arms around him and sighed. "It's over."

"Does that mean I can go now?" Harry asked hopefully.

"Of course not," Vina said. "I am here to please you."

"What's going on here? What do those egghead telepaths want with me?"

"If I tell you, will you choose some fantasy and let me live it with you?" Mudd nodded.

"The Talosians have been living here for thousands of years. They can't repair their machines any more, and they spend their time probing the minds of zoo specimens gathered long ago from all over this part of the galaxy."

"So? I can't repair anything. And --" Something dawned on Harry. "Zoo specimens? Like -- breeding pairs?" Harry chuckled incredulously. "I never thought of myself as a stud."

Vina quickly changed the subject. "You said that if I told you --"

"I didn't say when I'd keep my promise, dearie. I'd like to think it over." He was worried about Leo taking the ship and leaving him here.

Vina was upset. "!'m a woman, as real and as human as you are. If they can --" Suddenly she stopped, and screamed in pain. "NO! Don't punish me! I'm trying --" She vanished.

Harry looked around and saw the Magistrate watching through the transparency. The Magistrate reached through it to set a vial of red liquid on the floor, then straightened. "The vial contains nourishment. I can make it look like anything you want it to."

Harry grinned. "All right. I'd like a four-course meal, with salad bar --"

"Within reason," the Magistrate said emphatically. "We're not magicians."

Suddenly feeling rather grumpy again, he drank the potion and tossed the vial against the transparency. The Magistrate stepped back, startled. Harry grinned. "Now that's very interesting. You were startled, weren't you?"

Instead of a reply, Harry got a change of scenery.



Vina was setting out a picnic lunch. Harry looked at the sky: Regulus V. The three suns were all near zenith — Regula and Reguleb together to the north near two of the moons, Reguleech to the east near two more moons. In the distance was the city of Hamoev, where Mudd had been born. Under a bush Regulan bloodworms — named for their color, not their diet — munched happily and harmlessly. Vina was unpacking a salad, apple cake, and delicious looking Elanian steak and tunafish sandwiches.

Vina looked up. "Lovely day! she said. "I left the thermos in the saddle."

Harry turned around. "Tangler and Wangler!" The two eelbirds chirped a welcome. "What are you doing here?" He stroked their heads as they reached into his pocket to find lumps of the native amber delicacy.

Vina said, "You're home. You can even stay if you want."

Harry grinned. "Wonderful. A day ago I was telling Leo about this place, how I'd like to come back. But now ...." He paused, and Vina said, "I hope you're hungry. The tunafish sandwiches are your sister Ruth's recipe."

Harry took one and took a bite. "Home, a wife -- if I agree to stay here and live the rest of my life in a cage."

Vina stood, went to him, and put an arm around him. "Harry, don't you see? They read my mind, desires, dreams of the perfect man --"

Harry chuckled. "Trying flattery now, eh? Think I'm a stud?"

Vina shrugged. "All right, my first choice was that pointy-eared guy, but the Talosians thought his genes would be incompatible." She paused. "I can see why you're rejuctant. You've been home, looting on Rigel; that's not new. A person's strongest dreams are about what he can't do. Now a professional con man, always expected to be so informal, so indecent and dishonest and improper -- he must wonder what it would be like to forget all that --"

The scene shifted, and he found himself in a Starfleet captain's uniform, at a formal ball. "Nice place you have here, Captain Mudd," said somebody. Harry turned and saw two grinning commodores, sipping wine. The rest of the room was full of couches, chairs, lounges, the walls covered with expensive paintings, and there was a chandelier in the center of the ceiling. Among the dozens of guests in the large room were Andorians, Tellarites, and Zathurians. In one corner were a pair of female Gorn,

the tiny males perched on their shoulders.

At the center of the room was an Orion, one of the aristocracy. Harry abruptly recognized her -- Vina, as a yellow Orion slave -- no, of course not a slave. She was seductive and beautiful, as well as untouchable, far more respectable and respected than the blue, the green, the indigo ....

The man who had first addressed him spoke again. "A beautiful place you've got here, Captain Mudd. You certainly were lucky to inherit all this. Suppose you had all space to choose from, and this was just one small sample. Wouldn't you say it was worth a man's soul?" That last question was given a mysterious emphasis.

Harry considered the question a few moments. Then he saw somebody arriving on the arm of a Tellarite admiral. Stella! She glanced in his direction. Her eyes widened. She let go of the admiral
and started marching toward him. Harry acted on reflex. No matter how well-behaved he was, she always
found a reason to yell at him, and him alone. Quickly he turned and walked, almost ran, out the nearest
door and down a corridor. Why did the Talosians put her in his fantasy? Didn't they know how he felt
about her? He remembered the Magistrate's startlement when he tossed the vial at her — they couldn't
read, or understand, such thoughts. Suddenly he stopped. Vina was there, waiting for him at the end
of the corridor. He glanced over his shoulder. Stella was gone, but he didn't feel any safer.



in the Entreprenise transporter room, Drake said, "Since Garrison's idea for walking through walls didn't work, we're beaming into the Talosian community."

Spxyx said, "If are readings are illusory, we could find ourselves beaming into solid rock."

Drake said, "Nothing will be said if anyone wants to back out."

Spxyx nodded. "I should be on the bridge."

Garison stammered, "i need to check on the heim."

Security guard Ralph Lemli backed away, mumbling something about duty rosters.

Leo started to say something, but Drake grabbed him and Harry's secretary, Joanna Moreau, and pulled them toward the platform.

"Energize," she said. They beamed down and found themselves in the cell with Vina and Harry. Vina looked up and said, "Oh, rats, I knew I was taking too long."

Harry saw them. "Oh, ah, ahem. How nice to see you, ladies; ah, this is Vina. Vina, this is Madeline Drake, Jennie Moreau, and Leo Walsh. How nice of you to come rescue -- er, ah -- "

Leo said, "! -- we were just checking on you."

"Right," Drake said, taking control again. She fired at the transparency with her phaser, but nothing happened. "It was fully charged when we left," she said petulantly.

Vina turned on her. "He doesn't need you anyway. He's already picked me."

"For what?" asked Moreau.

"Now there's a fine choice for intellignet offspring!"

"Oh," Drake said. "Breeding slaves, are they? Well, idle hands make naughty work."

"You're not much better, computer-head."

"Well, considering your age -- " Drake began,

"Oh, shut up, the Magistrate's here," Vina said.

The Magistrate said to Harry, "You now have a selection. One female is young and beautiful, the other is intelligent."

"Gee, thanks a lot," Moreau said sarcastically.

"Harry's not my type," Drake said. "I intend to break him out of here ...." She paused, noticing a slight contradiction there.

Leo noticed the contradiction, too. "She wants the combination to your safe."

The Magistrate said, "You still have your choice of Vina or Moreau."

Leo grinned and put one arm around Vina, who felt a little uncomfortable. His breath smelled of Saurian brandy and Vulcanian cigars.

Harry immediately grabbed the opportunity. "There, you've got two volunteers."

The Magistrate pressed a button and the air wavered. "The transparency is removed."

The five stepped out of the cell so the Magistrate could lead them to the elevator, and they went up to the surface.

Once there, they could see that the bottom of the shaft was gone after all. "Sheesh," muttered Drake. She pulled out her communicator, but it didn't work. She pointed her phaser at the Magistrate, who said, "No. Now that you are on the surface, you will begin your work. Beginning with killing

me, if that is your choice. There are others who can replace me."

Drake had an idea. She twisted the nozzle of the phaser. She said, "This phaser is on overload. It's wrong to make a whole race of slaves."

The Magistrate paled. "This is not a deception? You would destroy yourselves?"

Another Talosian came out of the elevator. Telepathically he told the Magistrate, Their records are inefficient and took a long time to analyze. In a few moments the Talosian had given the Magistrate all the information in the Entreprenise computer banks.

The Magistrate stared, astonished, at the Humans. She said, "We have just finished analyzing your records. We had not believed this possible. The customs and history of your race show a unique hatred of captivity. Especially when you are well provided for, you prefer to be free to loot and pillage on your own. This makes you too greedy a species for your needs."

"She means," Vina sighed, "they can't use you. You're free to go."

Drake turned the phaser off, and just in time, too. Harry had been about to faint. He sighed. "So that's that."

The Magistrate said, "Your unsuitability has condemned the Talosian race to eventual death."

Harry suddenly felt a strange mixture of sorrow for the Talosians and greed for himself. "Perhaps some sort of trade --"

The Magistrate shook her head. "You would learn our ways, and become our competitors, and one of us would destroy the other -- or themselves. It is important to our beliefs to prevent this."

Drake had contacted the ship. "The transporter's all ready," she said.

Leo grinned at Vina invitingly. "I've been thinking of taking a little vacation with a young lovely -- would you like to go visit Typerias?"

Vina hesitated and shook her head. "No, I can't go."

Leo didn't notice the sad expression in Vina's face. "All right, I can take my vacation here --"
The Magistrate smiled sadly. Vina's face was changing, getting older and more wrinkled.
"Ah, Vina --"

"This is the female's true appearance," the Magistrate said gently.

"This is the truth," Vina said in an old woman's voice. "They found me in the wreckage, dying. They healed me. Everything works. But they had no guide for putting me back together. Now do you see why I can't go back?"

She turned and stumbled toward the lift. Harry, Leo, Drake, and Moreau watched her with horror and pity. Harry felt a tear come to his eye. Leo cleared his throat. "I'd feel like a cad if I decided not to have me vacation here."

Harry smiled slightly. "You have some decency in you after all."

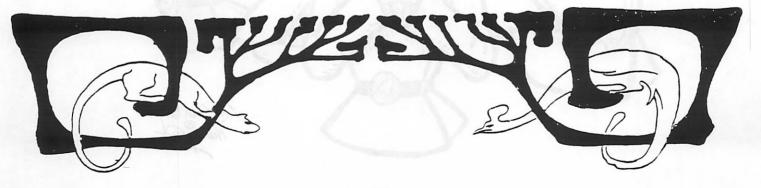
The Magistrate said, "That won't be necessary." At the shaft, the lovely Vina was accompanied by images of Harry and Leo. They turned and waved, then went into the elevator.

The Magistrate smiled. "She has her illusion, and you have reality. May you find your way as pleasant."



Back on the bridge of the Entreprenise, Harry and Leo sat on the couch at the captain's console. Leo glanced over at Harry and said, "All right, say it. I was wrong back at the bar. Sometimes it's just as well for a person to, well --"

"Stow it," Harry said gently. "As long as she's happy. I'm taking this ship to Wrigley's for a real vacation. I've got this idea Wrigley might be interested in ...."



## New Blood, Old Blood

by Moria Washburn



Introducing ...

#### Captain: Shriv Thelpav Thunk

A reserved, soft-spoken Andorian who is noted for his sterling character and his atypical emotional sensitivity. Inspiring a neurotic mixture of loyalty and guilt, he has the distinction of being the only captain in Starfleet whose crew can't bear to hurt his feelings.

Like all good captains, Thunk's only true love is his ship. Unlike all smart captains, however, Thunk also has a wife. She dutifully waits for him back on Andor, and he dutifully visits her every extended shore leave he gets. They have twelve little Andorians.

Thunk rarely leaves his ship for short-term R & R's, largely because he cannot afford it — there is virtually nothing left of his captain's salary after the standard deductions for his family are made. He generally spends most of these R & R's playing chess with his Vulcan science officer (who refuses shore leave as a matter of principle). Since they usually tend to spend a good deal of off-duty time in one another's company, rumors have begun to circulate concerning the exact nature of their relationship. These lascivious speculations are totally unfounded, however; thoroughly sick of the subject of sex, Thunk's only erotic hobby is buying cheap prints of famous nudes and painting clothes on them.

#### First Officer -- Communications Specialty: Sally Abuyumyum

An Egyptian ethnic, she believes herself to be a reincarnation of Nefertiti and decorates her quarters with a modley but sincere assortment of pseudo-Egyptian objects, including her most prized possession — a rare reproduction of a 20th century mummy movie sarcophagus. She always sleeps under a lithium frame pyramid in order to absorb the cosmic energies of the universe, aid in her psychic contacts with kindred spirits (most notably Ikhnaton) in the Egyptian netherworld, and to preserve her flawless complexion.

She was transferred to the <u>Interrupt</u> by Starfleet as a result of her annoying habit of translating critical messages into hieroglyphs. This peculiarity does not prove a problem on the <u>Interrupt</u>, as the Interrupt never receives any critical messages.

Abuyumyum has a romantic fixation on Thunk, despite his sorrowful refusal to let her keep an Apis bull in her quarters (he <u>did</u> let her keep her sacred cat). She worships Thunk — literally — and watches every tilt of his antennae with rapturous adoration. Although she has yet to detect even the slightest indication of a reciprocal emotion in him, she nevertheless perseveres in her infatuation.

One of her favorite off-duty pastimes is throwing darts at a holograph of Silka.

#### Science Officer: Xlprxlsnb Silka

A young, slender Vulcan who joined starfleet on the Special Introductory Six Month Trial Plan to prove himself that the Vulcan Way really is superior to all others, he unfortunately neglected to read the microprint in Pictish on his enlistment contract and found himself on the interrupt's five-year mission. Being a true Vulcan, he took the discovery of his duping stoically, retaliating only by reprogramming Starfleet's main computers so that all contracts now have microprinted Vulcan obscenities. Starfleet has yet to discover the difference.

One of Silka's many pet peeves with life aboard the <u>Interrupt</u> is that he has had to take up the unVulcan habit of locking his door. For some incomprehensible reason, female crewmembers (as well as a few males) kept getting lost in the dark corridors and accidentally stumbling into bed with him, after which they almost invariably sprained their ankles and had to spend the night.

Thunk is the only individual on the ship with whom Silka deigns to spend his off-duty time willingly. Although he finds the Andorian's maudlinness to be rather offensive, he still considers Thunk to be the brightest representative of the semi-intelligent races on the <a href="Interrupt">Interrupt</a> -- and possibly even as intelligent as an average twelve-year-oid Vulcan.

#### Chief Medical Officer: Dr. Prometheus Snitkorn

Dr. Snitkorn, who hails from trendy Imokurok III, conscientiously stays abreast of all the most recent medical developments and is particularly receptive to new techniques gleaned from alien cultures. Unfortunately, in his eagerness to provide the untimate care for his charges, he sometimes fails to test these techniques properly before using them. Snitkorn is philosophical about his mistakes however; after a few more swigs of Romulan prune juice, he generally realizes that the unfortunate crewman was doomed by kismet anyway, and marks the loss down in the medical log as being the captain's fault.

His one real complaint with is job is that recently the officers and crew of the Interrupt have been shockingly healthy. In fact, no one has even had a cold since he accidentally turned Ensign Blatic inside-out while trying to treat a case of the vapors.

For lack of anything else to do, Snitkorn has been conducting research on a new technique in

preventative medicine that he learned from a Stwars cultwoman — he slips up behind the "subject" and raps him/her in the spine (assuming that he/she has one) with a rubber mallet while screaming "The Force is with you!" So far his results have been excellent; the subject shows an immediate and dramatic increase in energy — often leaping straight up several feet, then bounding down the corridor excitedly. The subject also displays the benefit of an extremely heightened sense of awareness of his/her surroundings for several weeks afterwards. When he has completed his research, Snitkorn intends to submit his results to the Starfleet Medical Journal.

#### Chief Engineer: Peter (Browny) Goodwrench

A dedicated officer who lives, eats, and sleeps with his engines, Goodwrench has absolutely no interest in other organic beings and rarely notices them unless they foul up his works in some way. He is, in other words, a completely normal example of that curious subspecies known as "engineer".

#### Navigator: Uurlklaakh

A sweet-tempered, slimy native of Sluggus VI, it is acknowledged to be one of the finest navigators in Starfleet and lots were drawn to determine which ship would get it. The <u>Interrupt</u> lost. Uuriklaakh uses its multitude of long, squirming tentacles to manipulate its instrument board. Since these tentacles are in its maw, it tends to droot all over the console, and while this does not bother it or the instruments, it does rather exasperate the helmsman.

Uuriklaakh, who leaves a sparkiing, viscous trail wherever it oozes, has a small robot vacuum cleaner that doggedly follows it everywhere. The need for this robot was first recognized after an ensign from Engineering, who was severely ingured when he slipped in Uuriklaakh's trail and landed on his coccyx, successfully sued Starfleet for gross negligence. (Coincidentally, this same ensign later suffered unique and fatal accident involving a magnetic bottle and antimatter.)

Uurlklaakh is gregarious and greatly enjoys interrelating with the other sentient beings on the <a href="Interrupt">Interrupt</a>. Oddly enough, however, although almost everyone likes it, many seem reluctant to spend much time in close contact with it. Uurlklaakh might be very lonely if it were not for a lieutenant from Supply. Instead of a bed, Uurlklaakh was a large tub in its quarters which the kindly lieutenant often comes by to share. While Uurlklaakh appreciates the company, it sometimes wishes that she would stop wriggling around so much before finally falling asleep, as she splashes water all over the floor which it must later reabsorb.

#### Helmsman: Stanley Brak

Other than being the command crew's token Anglo, Brak's outstanding characteristic is that he hates Uuriklaakh. Passionately. Every watch he has to bring a thick sponge to sop the drool off of the helm controls. Since Uuriklaakh's drool has the consistency of okra slime and smells like a dead gilcrump in the sun, Brak never eats anything for six hours before his watch.

Brak used to indulge often in vivid and detailed fantasies of removing Uuriklaakh in colorful and permanent ways until he had the horrible experience of living one of those daydreams on the Shore Leave planet. He had gleefully hacked Uuriklaakh into a thousand pieces only to have each piece grow back into a new, friendly, helpful, slimy Uuriklaakh. They had followed him everywhere for the remainder of his shore leave despite any and all attempts to wish them away. Since that traumatic experience he has tried to content himself with raising snails in his quarters and pouring salt on at least one each day.

#### Our story begins ...

The USS Interrupt glided regally through the trash spangled blackness of the space lanes, her air of power and dignity only slightly compromised by the fresh graffiti scrawled across her silver skin. As the last of the great Constitution class starships scheduled to undergo renovation and upgrading, she tended to elicit amused, and occasionally amusing, remarks from the starbases that she frequented, inciting some particularly playful elements to express their sentiments in the form of erudite essays on her hull. This playfullness, matched by an equally good-humored attitude among the Interrupt's crew, had resulted in a number of very playfully inflicted injuries on starbase personnel including one extremely good-natured murder over an epigram concerning someone's mother.

Starfleet Command, with its typically easygoing attitude of "Starfleet personnel will be Starfleet personnel," thoughtfully overlooked the increasing number of such incidents, along with Captain Thunk's frequent requests for surface resheathing, electing to allow the <u>interrupt</u> to retain her noteworthy exterior intact until her next scheduled refitting. Unfortunately, with Starfleet's budget under

strict scrutiny by the Federation Auditors Office (staffed largely by Vulcans and a Terran ethnic minority), not to mention the frequent expenditures for repairs to the Fleet's premier starship — Enterprise — Command had no option but to defer the Interrupt's refitting for an indefinite period.

In the interests of maintaining a good public image, this delay had necessitated the reassignment of the interrupt and her impressive assortment of "not-suitable-for-those-under-the-age-of-eighteen (Human); forty (Vulcan); twenty-eight (Andorian); seven (Tellarite); etc." contumelies to a less populous, prosperous, and politically potent sector of the Federation informally known as the Boondocks. To a lesser ship and crew this backwater assignment along with the apparently permanent tapestry of interwoven taunts and vulgarisms might have proven irritating, perhaps even embarrassing, but to the hardened professionals of the Interrupt — veterans of more diplomatic disunity disturbances (ambassadorial fistfights) and constabulary-crowd controversies (riots) than Starfleet cared to acknowledge — such new sentiments as "Just the sight of the USS Interrupt is fatal to Klingons — they die laughing" and "Killjoy was here // But now he is not // The captain called him // For you can guess what" merely provided an artistic complement to the preexisting epigrams of "If thith thip ever getth an Andorian captain, he'll be thunk for thure" and "What's moist and pink and tight at night? — Uurlklaakh in a tub full of Saurian brandy." There was also a certain amount of consolation in the fact that the Boondocks was famous for the profusion and perversion of its brothels and dope dens.

On the Interrupt there was the usual inertia following a major shore leave. The crew had enjoyed three weeks to travel home or into trouble, the Interrupt had enjoyed a moderate overhaul of her warp engines and computer system, and Starbase 113 had enjoyed adding to the Interrupt's decoration.

Slumped in his command chair, Thunk was still brooding over the first sight of his ship after he had returned from Andor. The newly painted interpretation of the warp nacelles in particular offended him; while he understood from gossip that Edoans did indeed have two, he personally found one more than he needed. Sighing somberly, he activated his computer access and began trying to determine just how much more damage his wife's new eggling was going to do to his monthly pay check.

First Officer Abuyumyum posed royally at her communications console, fingering her new scarab earrings and covertly watching Thunk. Three weeks of intensive study on the subject of Andorian eroticism in libraries and red-light districts had provided her with several scenarios. Now all she had to do was come up with a plan to get rid of Silka -- permanently if possible.

Silka was entertaining himself at his science station console. Having already examined the over-hauled computer system, erased the expected obscene messages and restructured the system to correct the mistakes of the Human system analysts at Starbase 113, he was now developing a program designed to eliminate certain of the aforementioned personnel with a convenient accident the next time they tampered with his computers.

At the navigation console joy abounded. Uuriklaakh gurgled contentedly to itself, blowing multi-colored, cinnamon scented bubbles out of the top of it's "head", and admired its new protoplasmic dye job with one extended eye stalk. Always in high spirits, it was especially happy now, having spent three weeks of ecstatic squirming and recombination with others of its kind. But although it knew it would miss the intimate contact (these stiff, skeletal beings were so <u>singular</u>), it nevertheless was delighted to be back on the <u>Interrupt</u>. It sincerely loved all of these dry, colorless creatures and had found itself almost homesick for them from time to time.

Next to Uuriklaakh, at the helm position, revulsion was the dominant emotion. Stan Brak seethed with disgust. Compulsively checking the carefully erected sponge barrier between his console and Uuriklaakh's for any trace of leakage, he fought back to urge to retch every time a cinnamon bubble burst over his head. He had spent his R & R getting doped out and trying to forget the sad fact that none of his begging, bribing, and bullying could get him a transfer off the interrupt. In the cloudy, hallucinogenic state of the last three weeks, he had often fantasized that Uuriklaakh had been incinerated in a shuttle accident, or mistaken for escargot in a French restaurant and eaten. But in his now perfectly lucid, horribly real state of mind, he was once again confronted with the slimy monstrosity that some Federation egghead (probably a root-ruminating Vulcan) had the gall to label as a sentient being. He wondered miserably why Thunk (the only decent alien in the galaxy — even if he did cry like a three-year-old every time some fool bought it) didn't order Uuriklaakh to stop making those revolting noises and smells. Maybe the captain had just decided to let it ride until the slug got tired of torturing them all and quit of its own accord. Then things could get back to their normal level of simple grossness.

Silka, in the midst of planning the back-up accident in case the first attempt failed, had noticed a communications signal on his board. After waiting for fifteen minutes to see if Abuyumyum would eventually notice it, and in the meantime completing his program, he decided to mention it himself.

"Captain," he said loudly enough to cut through everyone's daydreams. "We are receiving a distress signal."

"What?" Thunk and Abuyumyum roused out of their separate preoccupations simultaneously.

"We are receiving a distress signal," repeated Silka patiently, as if to dense preschoolers.

"If our esteemed executive officer can keep her fingers out of her ears and her mind off of our captain's aural receptors, we may be able to determine the source."

"You're the one with the sensors, Grass-Gut," snapped Abuyumyum, letting go of her earrings hurriedly. ""Trace the signal, for Aten's sake!"

"I have already done so and transferred the coordinates to the helm," responded Silka smugly.

"You, however, might consider attempting to contact the vessel in distress to gain identification and and specifics on its emergency. I can demonstrate to you how to so use your equipment if necessary --"

"I'll demonstrate what you can do with your equipment, you cucumber-crunching c--!"

"Hush, children," interrupted Thunk in his sofft, arresting murmur. "Our aid is sought by some unfortunate vessel. We should cease our affectionate squabbling and attend to their distress."

"Course is already laid in, Captain," interjected Brak with a self-satisfied smirk at his own efficiency.

"Excellent, Stan, please proceed at warp six." Thunk tilted an approving antenna toward Brak.

Abuyumyum drew a wistful breath at her perspective on Thunk's antennae and reluctantly turned her attention to her board. "I can't raise the ship in distress," she reported presently. "The emergency beacon is on automatic, and the vessel identification response has been deleted."

Thunk looked thoughtful. "Most unusual. It would appear that they do not wish to be known until actual contact. Certain ominous possibilities arise; we must use all caution in our approach." He glanced over to the science station. "Silka, attend most closely to your sensors in order that you might identify the class of this mystery vessel before we are within weapons range."

Silka, already bent intently over his sensors, didn't bother to reply."

As the <u>interrupt</u> neared the vessel in distress, the tension on the bridge increased. Even Uurlklaakh had stopped gurgling. Suddenly there was a sound suspiciously resembling a gasp from the science station.

"There is something?" asked Thunk anxiously.

"I have identified the ship, Captain," answered Silka with an air of mild surprise. "It is the Enterprise."

There was a momentary stunned silence on the bridge, then Thunk found his voice. "Surely not, Silka. The Enterprise may often require repairs, but she never requires assistance. Is it not perhaps some other reconditioned Constitution class starship? There are, after all," Thunk's voice dropped into a note of aggrievement, "many others now."

"Sir, it is the Enterprise. She is unmistakable." Silka stared Thunk down.

There was an abrupt guffaw from the helm. "Starfleet'll never get over it! The great, legendary Enterprise rescued by us!" His snide amusement was short-lived as he glanced over his shoulder and saw Thunk's hurt expression.

"If they seek succor, is the <a href="Interrupt">Interrupt</a> less worthy to lend it than another ship?" murmurmured Thunk in a deeply injured tone.

"No, sir, of course not. Sorry, sir." Ashamed of his thoughtless remark, Brak quickly looked away and concentrated on guiding the Interupt into transporter range with the Enterprise.

"There are no life readings emanating from the Enterprise," reported Silka.

"Everybody's dead?!" gasped Abuyumyum.

"That is not an unreasonable assumption; we will, however, have to board her to be certain. Our sensors are not sensitive enough to verify that probability." Silka looked toward Thunk.

Thunk shook his head slowly, sadly. "So horrible to contemplate. Such a fine crew. Such a brilliant commander — though never did he seem quite the same since he lost the Vulcan, Spock."

"He should have counted his blessings," muttered Silka, rather more loudly than he should have with an Andorian in the vicinity.

Thunk looked up in surprise.

"I, ah," Silka cleared his throat uncomfortably and avoided Thunk's puzzled gaze. "I simply meant that Humans are prone to doing that. Aren't they?" He glanced over at Abuyumyum and found her looking at him oddly. He decided that it was time to redirect the conversation.

"Atmosphere and temperature are normal on the Enterprise," he announced, making a show of checking his sensor readings. "We will not require any special support equipment for our boarding."

"Indeed?" Thunk angled his antennae toward Silka uncertainly, still pondering the Vulcan's cryptic remark. "There seems no reason to delay the possible revelation of tragedy then. Come, let us go."



The Interrupt's boarding party materialized on the bridge of the Enterprise. Thunk, who was acquainted with Admiral Kirk and admired him, had elected to come himself. Along with him were Silka, Browny Goodwrench, Dr. Snitkorn, and two suitably anonymous security guards; one green, the other well-seasoned.

They arrived into a breathable but distinctly rank atmosphere. The green security guard immediately began to retch, and Silka had the grace to look rather embarrassed at heving neglected to mention the possibility of advanced organic decomposition.

"My cherished Thalera-sha ..." murmured Thunk in sick horror.

Snitkorn, understanding at a glance that his services were useless, grimaced and glared over at Silka. "Was it you who said that we wouldn't need respirators? Didn't it ever occur to you that a ship full of corpses—"

"Blu-a-agh! Blu-a-a--!" The green security guard was green indeed as he doubled up over a railing. The seasoned security guard sneered contemptuously at his younger shipmate and casually stepping over a prone body, settled comfortably in its vacated chair to wait.

"--might just make for one foul atmosphere? Galaxy knows what we might pick up breathing this; bubonic plague, Viertsen's green-flake, Montezuma's revenge--"

"Blu-a-urp-agh--!"

"Lordy, what a beyooteeful ship! Just look at them engineering boards! Mama, buy me a one a these--!" Goodwrench headed for the engineering console like an iron filing for a magnet.

Silka, having regained his racial arrogance in the face of gross miscalculation, strode back to the science station and gingerly shoved the corpse out of the way. "Captain, I will run the last entry of the ship's log and attempt to discover what happened."

"Blu-a-agh-a--!"

Thunk barely nodded and slowly stepped down to the command chair. He stood for a long moment beside the crumpled figure inhabiting the chair in death with the same compelling authority as it had in life. Ever so gently, ever so sadly, Thunk touched the bowed head, barely ruffling the thick hair. "Ah, dear Admiral, to see you so, to know that you will wander the galaxy no longer ...." A silver tear traced down the Andorian's blue cheek.

"I wouldn't touch him too much if I were you, Cap," said Snitkorn, wrinkling his nose with distaste. "I'd guess that these people have been dead for over a week. You accidentally roll him out of that chair and he's liable to split open like a rotten--"

"Blu-a-a-a-agh-blu-a-agh-a-a--!!"

"Be silent!" Thunk snapped with a flare of Andorian temper. "I will not have such a casual, callous speech in the presence of tragedy. It may be that a similar fate will befall you one day."

An immediate silence fell as everyone eyed Thunk with the chill suspicion that he had just made a threat. Living day to day with his great gentleness, they tended to forget that Thunk was an Andorian and could revert to Andorian behavior under sufficient provocation.

"Captain," ventured Silka into the hush. "I have scanned the last entry. It appears that Admiral Kirk ordered the extermination of himself and his crew."

"Ordered this?" Thunk blinked, shocked out of his anger.

"Oh, Galaxy! I knew it -- it's some mutant disease that doesn't show up on the mediscan--!"
"Blu-a-agh!"

"Well, I knew you couldn't blame it off on technical failure. This baby's the most beyooteeful thing I ever--"

The seasoned security guard stifled a yawn.

"It was due neither to technical failure nor to any exotic disease — at least, not to any <u>physical</u> disease. This log deserves further study in a less stressful environment. Might I suggest that we return to the Interrupt, Captain? There is no danger to our ship, I assure you. What was, is no more."

"Do you know what in the Galaxy you're talking about? If not, I've got this new experimental treatment from Altunis XII that's just the thing to fix you right up--"

Captain, do you s'pose I could stay aboard and look this baby over? Please? Maybe I could pick up some pointers for my sweetheart--"

"We will all return to the Interrupt to seek out reasons for this macabre bidding of Admiral Kirk's."

Thunk paused and looked down again at the pitiful form in the command chair. "Thalera-sha take mercy upon his restless spirit. I pray he had just cause to commit such an act as this."

# USS Enterprise Captain's Log: Stardate 9426.83 \*\* FINAL ENTRY \*\*

I, James T. Kirk, accept full responsibility for the action that I am about to take, and for the chain of events that led to this. It was my inability to accept inevitable loss with grace, my arrogant refusal to believe in no-win scenarios and my famed talent for circumventing them by fair means or foul that drew us all into this untimate no-win.

When I lost Commander Spock last year, I thought at first that I would be able to accept it and go on with my life. But I was deceiving myself. With every passing day the loss, the loneliness—and the knowledge that I had finally been beaten—became more intolerable until at last I knew I had to grasp at the chance, however remote, that Spock might still somehow ... be, that he might somehow have regenerated by the Genesis effect. There had to be some way for me to pull off yet one more "miracle." In my smug arrogance I defied logic and sanity, God and Starfleet to look for Spock, and — may God have mercy on my soul — I found him.

I found him. Alive. Regenerated. Resurrected. How can I ever describe my joy? How can I express an elation that expanded me beyond the limits of my body on wings of burning triumph? And, oh God, how can I explain the sickness in my soul when that triumph heeled over into ruin? When my phoenix turned into a nazgul that dragged me down into the damning flames from which nothing is ever resurrected? Instead of the ultimate victory, I have suffered the ultimate loss. And I have inflicted that loss on my people.

It was McCoy — always so perceptive — who noticed it first. Noticed that Spock was somehow ... different. That he didn't look out of his eyes in the same way as he had before. I was so blinded by my joy, by my presumptuous conquest over Death, that I didn't see it — didn't want to see it. God, if only I had, if only I could have stopped Spock before he had spread his poison throughout the ship. If only I had listened to McCoy.

Maybe because as a physician of both body and mind, he knew the true Spock better than any of us, or maybe just because he didn't let his awe overwhelm his reason, McCoy was the only one who understood in time what that critical, fatal difference meant. He tried to warn the rest of us, but we were already hopelessly entranced by the dark spell of forbidden knowledge. There were so many things that Spock — or the thing that had once been Spock — had to say; amazing things, glorious things, things that we thirsted and delighted to hear, things that altered our perception of life and death and reality. Things that no man, no mortal being, should ever have heard; things no mortal being can bear to know.

Two days ago McCoy broke the spell. He struck Spock over the head, stunning him, and shoved him out an emergency evacuation tube. Out into space the thing was isolated. Out into space where the Vulcan body ruptured in the vacuum. McCoy did what I never could have, what had to be done, and I cannot condemn him for it. Still, I would have preferred it if Spock could have been put into the transporter and beamed out in widest dispersal. I would have felt better. Safer.

I look back on my life from this moment and I wish that I'd had the humility to let Spock stay dead, or that I'd never known him at all, or that I'd stayed home in lowa and raised corn. Yes, that's what I really wish. I wish I'd never joined Starfleet, that I could have avoided the agony of growing old and sick in spirit with a disease that mere years could never have inflicted, that I could have been spared looking into my dearest friend's eyes expecting to see his familiar, beloved spirit shining out, and to have seen instead ... a light too bright to bear ....

I can't say for certain that what came back as Spock was evil — I don't even know what "evil" is anymore. Maybe it doesn't really exist at all, maybe it's just something that we so-called sentient beings made up, trying to cope with concepts that are beyond our grasp. But whatever the thing was that looked out of Spock's eyes, whatever it was that eclipsed the man I knew and loved, whether it was some distortion by the Genesis effect, or an ascension into another plane of being, was somehow wrong, and we couldn't— can't — cope with the knowledge that It brought us.

We can't forget what we learned, and we can't live with it. And even if we could, we couldn't morally choose to do so and risk passing this infection of the spirit on to others. McCoy understood that first, too. It was in his suicide note that he made me understand it.

I have ordered all records and evidence that pertain to this incident to be destroyed; the less that is known the better. I leave behind only this final log and the advice — no, the warning — that Project Genesis be abandoned. It holds dangers beyond anything we could ever have imagined.

I know that many, probably most, will think that I've gone insane and murdered my crew by releasing the nerve gas. Let them believe what they wish. What I do is a kindness to my people, and to myself. We have all agreed to it. It is our only way out.

### James T. Kirk Commanding USS Enterprise

The boarding party, with the addition of Abuyumyum, gathered around the briefing table. On the bridge, Brak and Uurlkiaakh were competently dealing with the challenge of towing a ship the size of the Enterprise with a ship possessing the engine and tractor power of the Interrupt.

Thunk sat with eyes downcast in sorrow and spoke so softly that everyone except Silka had to strain to hear. "After examining Admiral Kirk's last entry, I have ordered the log of the Enterprise to be put under highest security seal. It will be for Starfleet Command to review the facts and decide upon an official stance in this matter — one that may ultimately have very little to do with the reality, I think.

"However, since Silka," Thunk inclined a reproving antenna in the Vulcan's direction, "saw fit to reveal one shocking circumstance of the Enterprise crew's so-sad end, I do not feel that it is improper for me to elaborate upon that somewhat." He paused and unnerved his people by raising his head to meet them eye-to-eye. "Admiral Kirk did indeed order the deaths of himself and his crew; the Intruder Alert Defense System was activated and all compartments were left open to it. His reasons for such an action I cannot reveal."

"Did it have anything to do with the space we're in, Captain?" blurted the green security guard.
"I read about what happened to the <u>Defiant ....</u>" He glanced timorously around the table as if looking for signs of incipient insanity, not a very reassuring thing to do on the Interrupt.

"No," soothed Thunk. "Though enacted here, the root to this tragedy began elsewhere. After deleting the Enterprise's spatial coordinates for the previous two weeks from the helm record, Admiral Kirk brought his ship into this remote sector, bounded only by Federation territories and intergallactic space, knowing that although she might not be found swiftly, she undoubtedly would be found by another Federation vessel. He removed her emergency response identification to reduce the possibility that the distress of so great a starship might specifically attract premature and undesirable attention from certain popular sources. His last thoughts were to protect his ship and the Federation.

"More than this I cannot tell you. And you are not to discuss this with anyone." Thunk, for a moment looking very much the ice-eyed Andorian, scanned his people, demanding and receiving their assured silence.

Satisfied that this would not become a subject of lightning, ship-wide gossip, Thunk lowered his head and voice again. "There is nothing more to be said. I release you to your duties." He rose and exited, followed closely by Silka.

There was a brief hush as the remaining personnel eyed one another, Thunk's warning very much on their minds. It was an exotic form of torture to have such a rich source of gossip and speculation and to be unable to take advantage of it.

"I wonder if they'll ever get her back into service," ventured Abuyumyum at last, hoping that it was an acceptably neutral subject.

"Pardon?" asked Snitkorn.

"The Enterprise. This incident, whatever Command decides to claim happened, makes her a good candidate to become a ghost ship." She noticed the number of raised eyebrows around her. "Well, you know how superstitious some people are," she said defensively.

"I don't know about ghosts," commented Goodwrench doubtfully, "but they're gonna have one hell of a time ever gettin' that stench outta the ventilation system. Once a smell like that's in a ship, you practically gotta dismember her circuit by circuit to get ridda it. Thoughtless of him not to have set the ship temp down to below freezing before he, ah ...." He trailed off, slipping a guilty glance over his shoulder toward the door through which Thunk had left.

"Well, whatever they decide to do with that morgue ship, this whole thing can only be good for us," announced Snitkorn, enjoying the suddenly shocked expressions around him.

"Good for us?" repeated Abuyumyum, sounding equal parts schandalized and intrigued.

"Of course. We're the ship that found the great Enterprise. We're the ship that's towing her in. That makes us instantly famous. The newsvids will be all over us when they learn about this. They'll want to see the ship that recovered the famed Big E." Snitkorn smiled triumphantly at the others. "Ergo, Starfleet will have to resheath the Interrupt now."

"Wanna bet?" drawled the well-season security guard.



### Speculation, Stardate: 8142.4

### by Mikki Reynard

His task was interrupted by a sensation of being dragged down, as though by huge weights. As equilibrium returned, he experimented with motion — and discovered the "weights" to be arms, legs, and head. Cautiously, he extended one hand, then the other. A fibrous-textured substance seemed to encase him completely. Curious.

He opened his eyes ... and perceived light, barely filtering through the dense matting. He dug his fingers into the casing and pulled out pieces, tearing it open. Crip, natural air bathed him; a bright sun shone on growing plants. He sat up. The only sound around him was the occasional rustle of stalks or leaves brushing together. He could faintly hear his own heart beating.

Over his soared a lepidodendron, its trunk too large to encircle with both his hands. Gingerly, he slid his palm across the patterned surface. The leaf scars were rough to his touch. Fascinating! His gaze traveled past the tree-ferns and on into the lush landscape. The sight surpassed every adjective he knew.

Clumsily, he got to his feet and tried walking. After a few steps, his body seemed to remember how ...

... KNEELING BECAME BEYOND HIS STRENGTH, AND HE SLOWLY FOLDED TO A SITTING POSITION. TRANSITION WAS IMMINENT.

PAIN RECEDED, THE DARKNESS BEGAN TO LIFT. RELUCTANCE WAS REPLACED BY CURIOSITY. HE RELEASED THE SEARED AND TORTURED CARCASS WHICH WAS RAPIDLY CONVERTING TO AN INANIMATE STATE, AND SLID EASILY, LIGHTLY, INTO A REALM OF PERFECT LOGIC.

As he stared back at the brownish-black cocoon he had just left, his sense of disorientation gradually lessened. He had succeeded — or something had succeeded. But what, precisely, had been the task? Among the ferns near his feet was a mossy mound. He seated himself comfortably, allowed his mind to empty of verbalized thoughts, and waited.

Fact: he was alive. (Purely subjective evidence, however.) Fact: his name was Spock; he was a Vulcan, son of Sarek, family of T'Pau, lineage of ... (identification sufficient); and a Starfleet officer — present (or rather, the previous) captain of the Enterprise. Fact: he had made the repairs which enabled his ship to outdistance the exploding Genesis device, but this had meant subjecting himself to a lethal level of radiation.

Working conclusion: they had botched his cremation. Fortuitous!

The smile began slowly, lit his face for a moment, then disappeared leaving no trace.

He theorized he was on the new world formed out of the Mutara Nebula by "Genesis" — that remarkable new technology developed to produce living from inert material, but which transmuted whatever pre-existing matter was caught in its wave effect. His torpedo-coffin must have entered orbit about the Genesis world after the disintegration of matter was complete, but before the field generated by the matrix had entirely subsided. This could explain the soft landing, the mutated torpedo casing, and his own amazing perpetuation. Had his will and sense of identity, coupled with his biofeedback knowledge of his body, been able to hold the atoms of which it was composed in their accustomed configuration during exposure to the life-creating properties of Genesis?

If only there were a way to reach his friends, reassure them!

When he imprinted his own thought-wave pattern on certain neural pathways in McCoy's brain, he was taking the only course of action which suggested any possibilities — unforeseeable though they might be. He had never tried to dissociate his consciousness completely from his body, although many Vulcans as advanced as he in the Disciplines practiced it at will. Of more concern, only a High Master's consciousness could survive as an individual identity in the absence of the living organism. If he succeeded, he would need an alternate link to the physical world. McCoy — a kind of homing signal ....

Did those close to him already sense he had escaped finality? A Vulcan would know, even across vast distances. A Vulcan always knew when bonding ceased — not only the physical, emotional <a href="thir-bond">thir-bond</a> which resulted from mating, but the <a href="pthir-bond">pthir-bond</a> of betrothal, as well. The curious sort of bonding he and Jim shared presumably occupied the same area of the brain ...

SPOCK ...!

The anquished voice of his <u>t'hy'la</u> sliced across his memory as it had sliced through the waves of pain in the reactor room. He had found his way back to the entrance purely by sound, for his eyesight was burned away by the radiation. All his strength had been needed to keep his body functioning—his heart beating, his lungs drawing air—as he fought to choke out those last, inadequate words of comfort for the grief-distracted Human who was the person most dear to him in the Universe. He could spare no attention for "shields," and his failing nervous system screamed with the additional torment of his friend's dismay and helplessness.

Shaken, he turned his attention to his surroundings. Jim would be all right. He had lost a first officer, but gained a son. In addition, he had his starship.

In the immediate vicinity were climbing vines, bromeliads, and various fungi, as well as large ferns. Beyond the glade, shrubs and thick grasslands, while some young hardwoods dotted the periphery. A glistening to his right, a kilometer or so away, indicated a body of water. To his left, a more sparsely overgrown ridge stretched toward what appeared to be higher ground in the distance.

The new class M planet would be reported immediately, of course. How much Federation red tape would have to be unwound before survey teams and colonizers began to arrive? Until then, patience and survival were his only concern. From what he had heard about the doctors Marcus' successful trial run of Genesis, food would probably not be a problem; but shelter might well pose a challenge to a person without tools on a planet which had just recently coalesced out of cosmic dust. The Genesis process had been designed to transform an already-existing space body, not assemble one from scratch. How many unintended phenomena would result from this modification?

He took off his jacket and pullover; interestingly, his clothing had retained its construction, although the materials themselves were slightly altered in texture. He made a sack out of his pullover by tieing the sleeves together around the neck end, the easier to carry any eidbles or other useful items he might encounter. With his jacket refastened and belted and the pullover draped over his shoulder, he set out toward the conifer ridge and the elevation beyond.

The stillness was profound — the most absolute he had known since the years spent in the Gol district of Vulcan as an acolyte of the Kolinahr discipline. On the Enterprise, there was no escaping the subliminal presence of the reactors, the ceaseless hum of activity. Even in his own heavily sound-proofed quarters, auditory stimuli could not be entirely eliminated. Here, he had not detected so much as an insect.

He regretted not having a tricorder, or at least a databoard. This hampered him in his capacity as a one-man survey party. His memory would have to assume the recording function. He resumed his mental set of inner silence; no inclination to evaluate would interfere with the accurate registering of sensory data.

After what his built-in clock pulse told him was seven point two-six kilometers, the ridge descended through a swath of bramble bushes and opened out again onto level terrain.

Odors of soil and flourishing plantlife wafting across the meadow teased him; the grasses crushed beneath his boots as he tramped released a scent of perpetual spring. The fragrant air was like a benediction. What discretelife form could contain enough appreciation to do justice to such a setting?

in this unspoiled world, he and Christine could walk together, touching, and no one would heed ... or comment. He would tell her how much he valued her gentleness, and her tolerance of his solitary ways. If her status were known, she would now be inundated with condolences. Would this ease her grief, or increase it? Insufficient data ....

The "high ground" consisted of rolling hills, elevated only in relation to their valleys, and he wondered if the whole planet would be abnormally lacking in topological relief because of its atypical origin. He spent the rest of the day minutely exploring the area, and the best he could find in the way of shelter was an overhang where soil had loosened and fallen away on one of the hillsides. It wouldn't even protect him from rain, unless the wind were from the opposite direction.

I retract my condemnation of zinc-plated, vacuum-tubed cultures, he thought ruefully. I am LITER-ALLY reduced to stone knives and bearskins. He felt the ground. Indeed — I do not even have the bearskin. Which may be just as well, however: in order to have a bearskin, one must first have bears ....

He removed three pebbles from the strip he had selected to lie on, and tried it out. Satisfactory. He pulled off a boot and scraped down the high spots with the edge of the sole until the area was nearly as smooth as his prized slab of Vulcan granite. After straightening up, he held out his jacket by the front flap to check how long it was sideways. Would it be more useful under him, or over? He was not dressed for winderness survival — only for a funeral. His.

Because he had specified his remains were not to be returned to his home planet, and because they were hazardously radioactive in addition to unappetizing viewing, he had been sealed into the shielded torpedo casing with no attempt at physical preservation or even a change of clothing, as there would have been if he were to "lie in state." (Barbaric custom! Vulcans were more sensible: the corpse was not normally required to be in attendance at the memorial service.) Thus, circumstances had operated in his favor: he had retained his thermal underwear. Even illogical Humans would not have dressed a dead body in such a clearly superfluous garment!

The sun had touched the horizon. He sat cross-legged on his jacket and sampled the roots he had gathered. A dedicated ascetic would recommend them.

That was the most obvious disadvantage of his new home: no dry plant matter left from a previous season. No firewood, no bedding. Any dry material he needed he would have to produce through his own ingenuity. Tomorrow, he would retrieve his "coffin." The material could be utilized.

The day had been warmer than the standard temperature on the <u>Enterprise</u>; adaptation had not required special effort. If he overdrove his metabolism now, the thermal output would not sink below normal tolerances before he was ready to awaken.

A chill breeze from over the dusk-shrouded lake crept through his meager shelter. A fern frond swayed and dipped, brushing his cheek. It would be most agreeable to sleep with Christine in his arms, her warm, smooth skin in contact with his body from face to ankles!

The subtle warmth released by her dependable Human metabolism had done what artful makeup or fancy hair styles could never have accomplished. And if he had foreseen the outcome, he probably would not have tried to avoid it. It was a good solution. Given his circumstances, and hers, perhaps the best.

He performed his evening routine of meditational exercises, and gave a prod to his temperature control center. Lastly, before curling up under his jacket to sleep, he narrow-tuned his brain waves to the homing signal. Jim: when you think of me, quiet your emotions, and listen! We are in communication, in time of need. Christine: do not grieve. I survive — and the bonding remains.



He returned to the site of his resurrection by a zigzag route, wanting to augment his mental map. The topography was random, and with each change of terrain plant forms suited to it had evolved. He seemed to be walking through some huge, capriciously laid-out garden, the various species contrasted so sharply. In only a few places had the types of flora begun to blend across the borders of their areas. It was at one such intersection point that the torpedo-casing which held him had come to rest.

After securing the transformed projectile to his shoulders with a harness of thin vines, he set out to explore in a "southerly" direction. The tree-ferns were replaced by cypress-like forms as he neared the lake, or bay, as the case might be. He decided to follow the shoreline. On the other side of the inlet, the trees resembled willows.

As the sun approached its zenith, the expanse of water continued to widen. The caloric value of the berries he had discovered earlier when he passed yesterday's bramble patch had worn off many kilometers back, and he was on the lookout for anything edible when he came upon a grove of bushes bearing tomato-sized fruits. They passed his critique, and he began picking a supply, putting the less ripe ones into the casing. Then he sat down under a ginko tree for lunch.

As he was eating, he noticed that his hands showed almost no trace now of radiation scarring.

Tiny, tender green scales were beginning to form. Scales??!!! He pushed up the sleeve of his thermal

underwear. His arm was covered with clearly defined scales. He felt his face .... The contours were unfamiliar.

Scrambling to the water's edge, he peered into the surface of the bay, which obligingly steadied with a lull in the breeze. The reflection he saw staring back at him would have destroyed the self-possession of any but a Vulcan. Even the shape of the skull was barely humanoid. It was as though the bones of his head had softened and run, with some of the mass from the jaw area collecting instead under the eyes. The cheekbones on either side formed one piece with the bridge of the nose; the mouth was only a slash; the jaw was lighter, with a narrow but still very determined chin. The skin was composed of scales. Spock shut his eyes, but when he opened them, the gruesome image on the water's surface only laughed as a ripple passed through it.

A few seconds of one of his disciplines restored his objectivity, and he looked more closely at the personage reflected in the bay. The distribution of the re-sprouting eyebrows and spikey black hair seemed correct, and the eyes and ears, at least, were those he was used to.

Plausible. His unprotected face had received the highest concentration of the radiation, and being the most damaged, was logically the most susceptible to the Genesis Effect. And Vulcan skin was not like Human skin with its pores and sweat glands: highly magnified, it was composed of scales—which served as miniature cooling fins in Vulcan's arid climate. He compressed the lipless edges of his mouth. It would seem ... I took my exterior for granted.



### Out of the Ashes

by Barbara J. Yanosko



He awoke as though from a heavy, troubled sleep, but the faces -- the face -- he expected to see were not there, only strangers of his own kind and the one who called him son. It was confusing; even the language sounded wrong -- yet was correct.

Sarek explained what had happened: Spock had been dead, and was now reborn. But that did not answer why he had no memory -- no life before this here and now.

They dressed him in a white accolyte's robe and led him out past the strangers in red and black, who were not of his people. He walked on, but one face stopped him, the face that had been missing. "Jim."

Memory trickled back, flooding his mind in bright revelation: he knew them all, and the reunion was ecstasy.

"Come," Sarek broke in on the group, "Lady Amanda will be awaiting us at the guest house."

The group moved in silence, too full of joy to speak. Sarek could not bring himself to chide them for radiating so much emotion; even Spock reverberated with it. And more than that, he could not berate them because his heart, too, was full. Emotion had won over logic. He would have to meditate on this, but he suspected Amanda would understand instantly.

She was waiting in the archway, tears streaming unashamedly down her face. She walked to Spock and touched his face with her two fingers, then collapsed into his arms. He carried her as a child to the serving room and settled her on a couch to recover.

"My son, forgive my display," she apologized.

"There was cause," he acknowledged, and touched her face, allowing the corners of his mouth to drift upward.

"Unemotional Vulcans, my eye!" McCoy observed in a droll tone.

Signalling for a servant, Sarek broached the major remaining problem. "Kirk, you and your people have sacrificed all to bring Spock back to us. What are your plans?"

"Spock can return to Starfleet; there should be no difficulty."

"You avoid the question, aside from the fact that Starfleet may have no regulations governing reactivation of a commission when one returns from the dead."

"And I thought you got got your sense of humor from your Human parent," McCoy said sotto voce to Spock, under Amanda's knowing smile.

"Well, Ambassador, frankly I had not counted the cost too closely, speaking for myself. If Spock's life won't redeem us in Starfleet, then we can worry about new careers," Kirk said, to the general agreement of his people.

"I have received sanctuary on Vulcan," Uhura reminded him. "I am sure my knowledge of communications can be put to good use here."

Sarek nodded. "Certainly you are welcome to take up residence on Vulcan if the need arises. What you did was motivated altruistically, but not logical, therefore gratitude must follow," he added.

"Sarek, I doubt the Masters would approve your reasoning," Amanda said wryly.

"Indeed, but they would agree with the end result," Sarek observed.

"Forgive the intrusion," broke in a young Vulcan entering the room, obviously distressed." "Speak, Sten," Sarek said in ackniwledgement.

"The Klingon -- he is gone," Sten informed them.

"What?!" Kirk jumped from his seat. "How?"

"I am sorry, sir, I do not know. We had two guards aboard the Kling ship to watch his cell. He asked for his grooming case. I myself examined it and could see nothing amiss, so we gave it to him. He stepped out of sight for a moment and simply disappeared!"

"But you searched the cell?" Chekov querried.

"Of course -- there was no sign."

"The recorder!" Chekov asked. "Did you review his actions?"

"No, I did not think to--"

"Let's go," Kirk said on his way out the door.



The ship still reminded him of a large and graceful alien bird. Sulu had said she was a beauty to pilot, and Kirk found himself admiring that aspect of the Klingon culture capable of putting such artistry into a machine designed for destruction. He also noted with a lift of his spirit that Spock was at his shoulder as they crossed the landing pad. Another part of him wondered what Maitz was up to.

"Okay, Chekov, can you play back the recording?" Kirk asked as they entered the bridge.

"I think so, Keptin," Chekov answered, seating himself at one of the consoles. "I've been sorting

out the workings of this equipment." His hands played over the controls and until a small screen displayed the security area. The picture dissolved and reformed to show the cell with the two guards and Maltz in clear view.

They watched in anticipation as Sten brought the grooming case on the scene. The security screen was switched off as they passed it to the Klingon and then reactiviated. Maltz opened the case and removed a brush and some other grooming aids. He then slung the carry strap over his shoulder, stepped to the near wall out of view, fiddled with the case and — disappeared.

"A personal cloaking device," Scott whispered. "The size of it - I wonder what the power source could be?"

"But ve have heard of nothing like this from the Klingons - or the Romulans," Chekov argued.

"Nevertheless, we have the evidence that it does exist," Spock stated.

"Rather, it is what we don't see that is the evidence," McCoy added.

The scene continued as the guards became aware of the empty cell. The security screen was cut and they rushed in. A blurring of the door frame told them how Maitz had escaped.

"He simply walked right past the guards!" Sulu exclaimed.

"Ambassador!" called another Vulcan guard, "one of the flyers is missing."

Sarek's right eyebrow shot up in response. "So, our invisible friend has widened the search area."
"But he will not get far," the guard informed him, "as the vehicle he took was on low charge."

"I think it is our responsibility to go after him," Kirk said. "Ambassador, may we borrow several vehicles?"

"Of course."

"Uhura, you and Scotty stay here to coordinate communication. Saavik, you, Sulu, and Chekov take one flyer. Spock, McCoy and I will take the other. Phasers set on stun." Kirk shot out the orders. "Ambassador, Amanda, with your permission ...."

"Indeed," Sarek answered.

"Let's go, then," Kirk ordered.

The flyers were four-man vehicles intended as personal transport, built to travel a mere 500 meters above ground level and were actually most efficient when skimming just above the surface. Saavik climbed into the far vehicle as pilot and Sulu and Chekov piled in after her.

"I believe I had better take the controls this time, Captain," Spock intoned, "as I am more familiar with this craft."

"What's the matter, don't you trust my driving?" Kirk asked mischieviously.

"No," was Spock's succinct reply as McCoy choked down his mirth under Kirk's glare.

"We should be able to follow the ionization trail if he does not have too much of a lead," said Spock as he powered up the flyer. They led the way out onto the desert scanning for the trail, a fruit-less prospect as it became obvious that Maltz had elected to fly high, causing the ionized particles to dissipate. A search pattern was established, with Sulu's team quartering the right sector while Kirk, Spock and McCoy covered the left. Maltz had an hour of flying time more or less, but he was the one selecting the course, even if it led nowhere. The searchers settled in for a prolonged pattern.

The fifteen-minute checks produced no promising news from either team. Finally Spock took their flyer over a high plateau, and they spotted the missing vehicle half hidden near a rocky outcropping. Kirk called in the other team while Spock set down within ten meters of the downed flyer, grabbing the tricorder as they left the vehicle. Maitz was nowhere in sight, but by scanning briefly they picked up a Klingon reading heading due north at two kilometers distance. Thirty minutes later the signal abruptly disappeared.

"Did something just eat him?" McCoy speculated.

"Either that ... or he suspects he is being followed and has activated the cloaking device," Kirk added.

At that instant something blunt chopped into the side of his neck. Had Kirk not turned to talk to McCoy his neck surely would have been broken. As it was, he dropped to the ground with a grunt, but managed to kick a foot out, producing a satisfactory thud and the aprupt appearance of their quarry. Maltz and Kirk both regained their feet and began circling warily.

"Be careful, Jim, we are near the drop-off in the plateau," Spock called.

Simultaneously Maltz rushed Kirk, butting him in the midsection and sending them both sprawling. Maltz got up first and leveled a kick at Kirk's head, but he grabbed the boot, twisted and lifted, flipping Maltz on his back. They both got up again and began circling, but the Klingon was not paying close attention to the terrain, only to his adversary. His left foot went out into empty air and he

tumbled over the side, saving himself from a two hundred meter drop only by grabbing on to a scrawny bush.

"Give up, Maitz," Kirk said, extending his hand, "where can you go from here but down?"

The Klingon stared at him a hard minute and then reached up and grabbed Kirk's wrist. "Only a fool fights in a burning house," he gritted as he was drawn up to safe ground.

"Some help you were," Kirk complained to his companions.

"You seemed to be enjoying yourself," Spock observed.

"I'm getting too old to enjoy myself like this so frequently." He rubbed at the swelling bruise along his neck.

McCoy checked out Maitz and declared that no permanent damage had been done. Spock retrieved the cloaking device and they headed back to the flyers. The other team had made the rendezvous so they were waved back to Gol. Kirk elected to sit in the rear with Maitz on the return trip.

"I was not aware that the Klingons had developed a personal cloaking device," he began.

"They haven't," Maitz replied tersely.

Kirk was nonplussed.

"How did you acquire such a device?" Spock put in.

"I did not acquire it, I built it. But because the Empire decided I was a communications officer, I could not also be an engineer and inventor — thus they ignored my proposals. I thought a prototype would be convincing."

"It is -- very!" agreed Kirk. "Do you wish to return to your Empire?"

"Without the device," Maltz stated. Kirk nodded.

"Can you return?" McCoy asked.

"Without the device, no. It is the only thing that would buy me enough protection from a disruptor bolt."

"We can promise nothing for the Federation. I'm not sure we won't wind up in some rehab colony ourselves, and it seems likely that most of us will not leave this planet," Kirk said.

"The device could buy your freedom," said Maitz. "I think I understand what 'irony' means in Federation Standard."

The remainder of the journey was completed in silence, each contemplating the possibility of a very restricted future. Kirk reflected that Spock had once said that there were always possibilities. He was seldom wrong, but unfortunately this seemed to be one of those times.

Kirk entered the guest house in a pensive mood. He was not prepared for the figure at Sarek's side.
"Admiral Nogura!"

"I see you were successful," said the slight, greying man glancing first at Spock, then at Maltz. He then fixed his infinitely black eyes on Kirk once again.

"I did not expect to see you here, sir."

"I fear that was my doing," Sarek admitted. "Clarification as soon as possible seemed advisable."
"Yes," Nogura acknowledged. "The Enterprise?"

"Self destructed to keep the Genesis information out of Klingon hands. The Genesis planet is gone, too. The effect was based on protomatter, and therefore unstable. Carol Marcus did not know, and her son David paid for the error with his life," Kirk summarized.

"Ah," intoned Nogura softly. "Once again, you and your people present us with a problem. You are too successful to be held in disgrace and you are too ... shall we say, unconventional to be hailed as heroes. And now there is the matter of the new cloaking device."

Kirk glanced sharply at Sarek.

"I am here strictly unofficially," Nogura assured him. "What I say will be heard only by those in this room. You and your people are accustomed to a great deal of lattitude, and you have often acted outside even those boundaries. I would like to suggest formalizing those activities."

"What do you have in mind?"

"The Federation has need of covert operatives, both in groups and as individuals."

"Privateers?" asked Sulu in astonishment.

"That is as good a designation as any. Your personal accounts can be enriched through devious methods and, of course, Starfleet would disclaim any responsibility for your actions. You would also need to 'officially' resign your active commissions, and of course, Captain Spock has the advantage of being dead."

Both Vulcan eyebrows hid in his hairline.

"A ship?"

"That Klingon vessel seems to have many advantages: speed, size, weaponry, and lack of Federation

registry."

Kirk surveyed his friends as each in turn smiled and nodded. McCoy mumbled about playing pirates of the Penzance, but also about needing a sawbones to patch the leaks. He stopped at the Klingon.

"Maltz?"

"Kirk, you offer me a better life than I could ever have hoped for. Admiral Nogura, you would make an admirable blood commander," he grinned.

Nogura bowed slightly in acknowledgement.

"The cloaking device goes to the Federation," said Kirk as a statement of fact.

"Of course."

"I think not," Spock broke in. "It is an effective device for the activities you suggest, especially if it is unknown to any interest group, including the Federation."

"Logical," Sarek agreed.

Nogura looked pained, and after a momentary hesitation, capitlated. "Agreed, but only for ten years, if it is not developed again independently. In ten years I shall retire. The plans must be kept in my safe."

"If we last that long," McCoy muttered.

"Agreed," Kirk said, extending his hand.

Nogura shook hands solemnly. "I wish you luck, and the Federation luck. You will have a two-month preparation period before you receive your first assignment."

"By the way," said Uhura, who had been standing quietly by Amanda, "we have another recruit."

Christine Chapel stepped from the antercom. "It is good to see everyone again," she beamed. "I'm sorry I couldn't come earlier, but I had to arrange Admiral Nogura's vacation."

"Ambassador Sarek suggested I contact Chris," Uhura explained. Spock gave his father an unfathomable look.

"But your research--" McCoy objected.

"Has been concluded, and besides, field studies are my special interest."

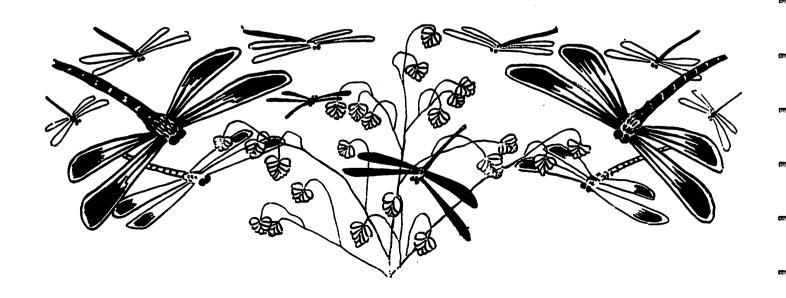
"You're sure?" asked Kirk.

"I had already resigned my active commission before coming here. Civilian life was proving duller than I dreamed possible and, besides, Leonard needs someone to order around and argue diagnoses with."

"It is settled then," Nogura observed. "Ah, one last thing; what do you plan to re-name your ship?"

"That was the easiest decision. "Kobayashi Maru," Kirk replied, as Spock, McCoy and Scott, Chris and Uhura, Sulu and Chekov, and Saavik nodded in agreement.

Maitz gaped in total confusion. "Huh?"



### In Which We Serve

by Isabel Klein



The ship's bell was struck one, twice, a third time as the members of the court martial panel rose, looking directly at the accused as if to glimpse the prisoner's thoughts, feelings in these last few seconds before the verdict was read. But not a flicker of expression was visible as the defendant stood, back ramrod straight, arms stiffly at his sides, gaze focused somewhere above the head of the President of the court martial panel.

Just what is felt when willingly tossing aside not only one's own career, but the careers of others as well? What does one feel when standing ready to hear the sentence of peers who sit in judgement on the actions of who who was destined to be Commander of Starfleet, who now stands rigid in the prisoner's dock?

The defendant had but one overriding desire — the conclusion of these proceedings, to know what the future held, if anything, and to put as much distance between himself and this courtroom as authority, in the guise of these judges, allowed. But feel? That would come later in the dark stillness of each night. Only then would be feel.

Was it worth it, others might ask. He had known the answer to that question as soon as he knew what must be done to save a friend's sanity. He did not regret making that decision or the ones that followed. He would do so again. But he did regret these procedings. It was a memory not to be erased by time — the sound of the ship's bell, the cold austerity of the courtroom, the grim tones and faces of the judges.

He was the last of the conspirators to be tried, as Starfleet saved their biggest fish for the finale. The press had had a field day, especially those members of the fourth estate whose mission in life was to bring the inadequacies and excesses of Starfleet to the public's attention.

The verdict was a foregone conclusion as the defendant had pleaded guilty to all specifications. In the eyes of the law he was guilty — the law looked not at reasons, only actions. He would follow his friend, guilty as charged on all counts. He would be stripped of rank and position. All that remained was for the words to be said, the rituals attendant thereto to be performed, and he would walk out of the courtroom dishonored, shunned, disgraced in all save honor.

in the next few minutes life as he had lived it for thirty years would end and a new, unknown existence begin. Welcome to infamy.

"James Tiberious Kirk, by your own admission, you are guilty of the charges levied against you. You have offered no defense and this court martial board has no choice but to find you guilty as charged on all counts." The Chief Judge paused, allowing the words to echo through the sparsely-furnished room. "Sentence is as follows: You are, as of this date, stripped of all rank, position and authority within Starfleet, and all rights and privileges assigned thereto. You are hereby dishonorably discharged from that service, and further this court sentences you to twenty years confinement on the penal asteroid, Leavenworth, without recommendation for parole; sentence to commence upon completion of these court martial proceedings. Does the defendant understand the sentence?"

James Tiberius Kirk stood motioniess, while inside his mind rose a primordial scream of denial.



It was a silent group that met in James Kirk's apartment. It seemed somehow appropriate, and lock was still keyed to McCoy's voice. Scott was calling down ancient Celtic curses on the heads of the judges; Uhura added African ones; and Chekov had a few Russian epigrams to add to the caldron. Sulu sat slumped in dejection, not even sipping the drink he held in one hand.

"We cannalled the Admiral rot on some penal asteroid for twenty years; for sure he'll he'll never come out alive."

"What are you saying, Scotty?" McCoy demanded. "That Jim will kill himself?"

"No, Doctor, just that he'll not try to survive."

"Same thing," McCoy muttered.

"No, Doctor, it isn't, as you should know. One is a conscious act, the other subconscious."

Scott looked to where McCoy sat with a glass and a bottle at his elbow. "Aren't you going to disagree,
Doctor?"

McCoy picked up his glass, staring into the turquoise liquid. "No, Scotty, you're right. Jim won't do anything deliberately. As long as there's the slightest kernel of hope, Jim will be all right, but when it reaches the point where he can see no escape — then he'll give up, won't put out one ounce of extra energy for his own survival. It will take a while — Jim won't stop searching for a way out for a long time, but eventually the confinement, the unending routine will begin to affect him until death seems preferable and — Scotty's right — Jim Kirk will never get off that asteroid alive."

"Then," Sulu said quietly, "we'll have to get him off ourselves."

Scott looked up in disbelief. "Are ye daft, lad? We can't just walk in and take him out."

"And why not?" Sulu demanded. "It's what he would do. It's what he's done."

"We'd have to make verra careful plans," Scott mused. "They'd be expecting something. So ... we'll have to give them something else to watch while our real attempt goes forward." Scott lowered his voice instinctively, acknowledging the danger should they be overheard. "And then, well ... ther's many a place in the galaxy where the Federation is not that important. We'll make them regret that they let us off with dishonorable discharges and then threw the book at the admiral—" Scott was interrupted by the door signal.

"Who do you suppose that is?" McCoy asked sourly, but when Scott got up to answer the summons, he added, "Don't answer and they'll go away." The signal came again. Scott shrugged and went to the door. No one knew they were here, unless they had been followed.

The hooded figure in the corridor stood silent, unmoving. The face was totally in shadow, reminiscent of another figure standing in that same doorway not so very long ago. After a moment, Scott growled, "Well, what d'ye want?"

"To be invited in, Mr. Scott," was the unexpected answer.

"Mr. Spock! Come in and welcome to ye. We thought you were still on Vulcan." Scott was pulling Spock into the room, but darted a quick glance down the corridor to reassure himself that it was empty. "But you've come to a wake, i'm afraid. Ye know what they did to the admiral?"

"That is why I am here. We cannot allow Jim to be sent to a prison asteroid. He would not survive."

McCoy was on his feet, advancing on Spock. "That's exactly the conclusion we've reached." McCoy cast a professional eye over the Yulcan. "Are you sure you're all together?"

One Vulcan eyebrow rose in response. "Yes, Doctor, as you have so quaintly phrased, I am 'all together.' I retain the memory of all that has happened. Your attempt to use the Vulcan neck pinch on the security agent was most illogical."

"it wasn't my idea," McCoy challenged.

Spock turned to the others. "Command will be expecting something," he said, echoing Scott's words.

"Aye, and we've decided to let them find something," Scott agreed, "perhaps several somethings."

"We must plan very carefully," Spock continued. Time constraints will be governed by the automatic appeal process and the resultant verdict. There will be only one real chance for success, and that a slim one. We are also unaware of the true state of Jim's mind. There has been so much—"

"You can leave that problem to me," McCoy volunteered.

"You have a plan already, Mr. Spock?" Sulu asked.

"Affirmative."

Chekov set down his drink. "Vell, I never did vant to be a starship captain," he muttered.

"You're not the only one, mister," Uhura reminded him.

"Now," Spock said as they all gathered closer to him, "this is my plan."



Spock left within a half hour -- staying just long enough to share a drink with friends, then reporting to Starfleet Headquarters for reassignment -- or so it would appear to any interested observers.

Uhura was next, bidding farewell, then leaving for her African home -- travelling on the red-eye shuttle.

Sulu and Chekov departed together, slightly the worse for the amount of alcohol consumed. Sulu was the more sober of the two. "You should have eaten something before coming," he admonished the unsteady Russian. "You knew that McCoy and Scotty would make a contest of it."

"But I did not think I vould have to participate--" he confessed, punctuating the sentence with a hiccup.

Sulu flagged down a passing aircab, going directly to the apartment they shared.

Several hours later, a staggering Montgomery Scott came out, tottered a bit and then headed off down the street, weaving first one way, then the other. Eventually, the local constabulary took him under their wing for the night.

McCoy was not seen until the next morning, exhibiting all the aftereffects of an all-night session with a bottle or two.

So reported the Starfleet security people assigned to follow the group. Each had done exactly as expected. The only surprise had been the presence of Captain Spock, and that was easily explained.

it was he whom this group had saved from death, and only natural that he would want to thank them for their efforts immediately upon arrival from Vulcan. He had not stayed long, and then had reported directly to Starfleet Headquarters.

Security congratulated itself on their wisdom and tightened the guard around the former Chief of Starfleet Operations, certain that an attempt to free him was imminent.

The next day James Kirk had two visitors, each duly approved and each thoroughly searched before being allowed in the cell.

Dr. McCoy came first, slightly bleary eyes giving mute testimony to the previous night's activities. He entered the cell with a medkit furnished by the prison doctor, to prevent any attempt to drug the prisoner or induce a chemical simulation of death.

McCoy did not stay long, and the conversation was limited to "pleasantries'" if anything in the coldly metallic environment could be described as pleasant. The doctor reassured himself of his patient's health, mental and physical, and departed, promising to visit again when allowed and to bring the prisoner a new pair of reading glasses.

The second visitor was Captain Spock. It was a painful visit for both of them. Each was hesitant at first, as they had not seen each other since Vulcan and then only briefly.

"Spock! -- | -- well," Kirk waved an arm, taking in the miniscule cubicle where they were allowed to meet. "It's certainly not Wrigley's Pleasure Planet."

Spock's gaze travelled briefly around the room. "Indeed. It grieves me to find you here, Jim."

Kirk's already pasty complexion paled still more, his usual healthy color suffering from his imprisonment. "You didn't have to come."

"I could not stay away. I would have been--"

"Illogical?" Kirk prompted.

"Inhuman."

"Spock!?"

"I seem to have acquired more of Dr. McCoy than he of me. I find myself reacting with distinctly human characteristics, but I find no additional evidence of logic in Dr. McCoy's actions than before.

It is ... disconcerting."

"!'!! bet," Kirk responded with a touch of his old humor. "But I wish you hadn't come. Command won't look kindly on your associating with a known mutineer." Kirk smiled slightly, the merest upturning of the corners of his mouth. "Among other things."

"Who would not be a mutineer were it not for me. Command can hardly fault me for loyalty to a commanding officer and a friend. If I understand Humans correctly, they put great stock in such actions ... or so they claim."

"This is a case of actions speaking louder than words. I don't want you getting into trouble. It would be nice if one of my old crew managed to keep his commission. Perhaps you should have selected your commanding officer with more care."

"I could not have chosen better were the decision mine," Spock declared.

Kirk reached out, touching Spock's arm. "Thank you, my friend," he said quietly. "Thank you. I still think you ought to get out of here. You could get into trouble."

"Let me be the judge of that."

"There's not much I can do about it, is there?" Kirk said. "You seem determined to stay. Well, then, have you been reassigned yet?" Spock accepted the change of direction in their conversation and, after a few minutes, he left Kirk alone to return to his cell.



Chekov and Sulu had set about getting themselves new employment. Starfleet-trained navigators and helmsmen were in demand in the private sector, and both easily secured positions with a passenger liner company. Due to the sudden "indisposition" of both a navigator and a helmsman, they were assigned to a small passenger ship ferrying businessmen within the planetary system. Both were bored beyond the meaning of the word. There was absolutely no challenge in what they were doing compared to darting around the galaxy on the bridge of a starship. Chekov was wont to complain bitterly the minute he got off duty. Sulu listened with a great deal of forebearance for awhile, and then told his companion to shut up.

"The money's good -- better than we were making. We'll soon have enough to make a down payment on a ship of our own and then we'll go into business for ourselves."

"Doing what?"

"Hauling cargo."

"But I don't vant to haul cargo," Chekov argued. "I vant to be vhat I used to be -- a Starfleet officer. It's all I ever vanted to be."

"Well, you can't -- not any longer. You knew that when you agreed to go with the admiral to Genesis.
"But I didn't realize what it vould really mean. I thought -- I don't know what I thought," Chekov ended with a slavic shrug.

"You thought that somehow Admiral Kirk would pull all the chestnuts out of the fire for all of us. Well," Sulu admitted, "I thought so too, but it didn't happen."

Chekov moved to the window, looking at the faint stars visible through the atmosphere. "Our careers are in ruins, and for vhat — so Admiral Kirk can rot in a jail cell for the rest of his life? So that you and I can make the Titan run four times a week? So that Uhura can disappear into the African veldt and McCoy spend his days searching through musty records for a cure for the common cold? And Scott — have you seen him? Scuttlebutt has it that he's doing some serious drinking — doesn't draw a sober breath. And is it vorth it? Yould even Spock say it's vorth it?"

"Perhaps the person you should ask is Admiral Kirk."

"I know what he would say."

"And if you had to do it again?" Sulu prompted.

Chekov stood a long moment before answering, his voice subdued. "I don't know, Sulu. I don't know if it's vorth it."

"Well, I do," Sulu declared. "And I'd do it again tomorrow, if the situation were the same."



The strained situation between Sulu and Chekov escalated to a level slightly less than armed combat. Surprisingly, neither made any move to change their living arrangements or work assignment. Sulu continued to save toward the purchase of a ship; Chekov began to spend rather wildly, running up considerable debt.

Across town, Scott drank at a steady pace, intoxication always merely a jigger away. He spent the evenings in a drunken fog, hardly ever leaving his apartment except to visit the local pub or to purchase more consumable.

it was several days later when Sulu tracked down Scott in a bar, imbibing with the rest of the regulars while spinning tall tales of deep space adventures.

"Sulu! Laddie! And what brings ye to this den of iniquity?" Scott indicated a chair and pushed a bottle in Sulu's direction. "Pour yourself a drink," he invited and then, when Sulu hesitated, pulled the bottle back. "No, I'll pour, for ye won't take enough on your own."

Sulu sat, looking with distaste at the size of the drink Scott placed before him.

"Drink up, lad, there's more waiting. And," Scott leaned over the table, "why did you come looking up old Scotty?"

Sulu looked around at Scott's drinking buddles still hovering around.

"To talk to you. Alone." He pushed the tumbler aside, as the audience melted into the background.

"And I want you sober when you're listening," he announced, pushing Scott's drink into the middle of
the table next to his own.

"Ye dinna have to go to such extremes, laddie. I'll listen to ye. Old Scotty has time for all his friends."

"Are you drunk?" Sulu asked dejectedly.

"Makes no matter. Drunk or sober, I'll listen."

"I prefer you sober, but since I've no choice ..." Sulu paused, stared into Scott's somewhat bleary eyes, decided that Scott was just this side of inebriation, and launched into his plans for the purchase of a vessel.

"Chekov's backed out, ye say?" Scott mused. "Now I wonder why. Not like the lad to back away from a thing he's committed himself to.

"Not exactly backed out, but hesitating." Sulu paused and when he spoke again his voice was even more subdued. "He's regretting going to Genesis," he said sadly. "He seems to be living in the past and the 'might have beens'."

"Only to be expected with the dark Russian devils inside him." Scott reached for his glass, then abruptly set it down before taking a drink and murmured reverently, "A ship, ye say?"

"Aye, Scotty, a ship!" Sulu repeated.

At a nearby table, the security agent detailed to watch Scott smiled to himself. Perhaps this was what they were waiting for -- Chekov might be persuaded to break ranks with his friends, and those

friends were going to buy themselves a ship. Headquarters would be interested. Very interested.



Uhura ran easily along the trail, bright African sunshine filtering through the leafy canopy over-head. She wondered if her extra shadow was keeping up. She had chosen a particularly long trail this morning, feeling the need for more than her usual run.

Uhura had made friends with her shadow. A handsome stranger in a small African village had little chance of remaining inconspicuous. They had even shared a few drinks — talking about life in Starfleet and space exploration, since he, too, had served on a Constitution class vessel. There was little reason to pretend he was other than he was — a security officer sent to spy on her. He had been Uhura's guest for dinner in the small rondaval she owned, and kept him appraised of her movements and her brief trips into the city, even taking him along in her ground car on occasion.

The shadow had implied that a deeper relationship would not be discouraged on his part, but Uhura had declined. Whe she considered what she was going to do to him, it didn't seem fair — not fair at all.



Spock sat at a computer terminal keying in information — testing, sorting, discarding. He had not yet found the combination he was seeking. Time was running out. Soon, Jim would be moved to the prison asteroid and Spock would be receiving a permanent reassignment. Added to this was concern about Kirk's mental state. Physically, he was fine — only an expected decrease in reaction time and muscle tone consonant with detention — but his mental state was deteriorating badly, helped along by a Fabrini drug, hidden in the frames of Kirk's glasses, and secretly administered by McCoy during his daily visits. Still, it was a very real worry for Kirk's friends — a growing concern that the induced imbalance in though processes might lead to a permanently diseased mind. They must rescue Kirk. And soon.

Long, slender fingers keyed new information into the terminal, the results indicating a fractional movement towards the answer sought. The fingers moved again. Information was displayed. The cycle repeated. Through long hours, a gaunt figure huddled over the terminal.

A staccato knock on the office door interrupted his work. Spock cleared the screen as the door opened, admitting a tall Andorian female, only the cut of the uniform indicating the sex of the visitor. Admiral Dworvin was the highest ranking Andorian in the Fleet, and though Spock had never met her, the list of her accomplishments was impressive.

She waved him to his chair as he started to rise, and took a seat across the desk.

"Your offices are sufficient to your needs, Captain?" she asked, more from politeness than concern. "You still await assignment, do you not? Your preferences, if any?"

"As the admiral is aware, I wish to return to my teaching duties here at the Academy, and have so requested." Spock's eyes rested on the admiral, seeking to understand the reason behind this unexpected visit.

"You do not desire command?" she asked, again an unnecessary question. Spock's views on command constituted part of his official record. "You commanded the Enterprise," the admiral reminded him.

"Only as a training vessel. However, that option no longer exists, as the admiral is undoubtedly aware."

The admiral was silent for a moment, as if debating her next words. Spock had the impression that she knew very well what she was going to say when she entered the room, and only wished to project the appearance of indecision.

"Your orders will be issued soon, but I tell you now -- you will be assigned to Starfleet Academy, Deneb IV as professor and head of the Computer Sciences Department for the next term. You are to depart as soon as the orders are cut. We need our best people at Deneb to establish the reputation of the school. You will do much to ensure that the standards of the institution are the very highest."

Spock stood in response to the admiral's leaving as suddenly as she had arrived. Command was showing undue haste to move him out of the mainstream of Starfleet life and away from any former Enterprise crewmembers who could possibly be a corrupting influence. Spock, already corrupted, returned to the terminal, keying in his access code and yet another set of variables. Time was even more limited than he anticipated. Even now, Jim's appeal was being heard and the verdict would be issued in a matter of days. Spock would not rest until the elusive answer he sought was known.

And then? Well, many careers had been sacrificed for him. He could do no less.





Sulu was pleading. "Look, Chekov, just come and look at the navigation console -- give an opinion. Scotty's already checked the engines, and with some work he'll have them -- well -- not good as new, maybe, but acceptable -- would you turn around! I don't like talking to your back."

Chekov ignored Sulu, continuing to fiddle with the keys of a computer terminal. "Pavel!" Sulu snapped.

"You know as much as I do about navigation."

Sulu clenched his fists, controlling the anger that threatened to erupt. "If I knew as much as you I'd be the navigator instead of the helmsman ... I just don't understand you anymore," he finished lamely.

"There is nothing to understand. I vill not give my life to chase a shadow. I have already given my career. Surely that is enough?"

"No!" For Sulu, Chekov's position was untenable, a repudiation of those beliefs which formed the basis of Sulu's relationships with his world.

"No!" he repeated. You're wrong. We are not chasing shadows. We are saving a friend who would do the same for us. There is no sacrifice involved." Sulu paused, hoping that Chekov would speak, say something that would bridge this ever widening gulf between them, but the ensuing silence was most eloquent, and eventually he turned away. "Scotty and I can check out that console. We won't bother you again."

Sulu grabbed his jacket from the back of a chair, then opened the apartment door. Chekov didn't move. He might have been made of stone. Sulu had hoped that Chekov would "come around," as Scott had said, but when he looked at that rigid back and heard the uncompromising silence, Sulu finally admitted defeat. "I think it would be best if one of us moved out. We'll talk about it when I get back."

Chekov still didn't answer, and Sulu left hurriedly before his anger overcame him. He went to the gym,finding an outlet in loosening tense muscles. He was in a considerably better mood when he returned to the apartment, determined to once more attempt to convince Chekov to join them.

But no trace of Pavel Chekov remained. It was as if he had never set foot in the place, let alone live there. Sulu's glance fell on the small lamp standing in isolation near the door. Chekov had always tossed his uniform cap on that lamp — letting it dangle rakishly until the next time he needed it. "Now, I couldn't do that in Starfleet," he always observed, and Sulu would add, "because we didn't have hats." And then they would grin at each other. It seemed silly now. A small thing. Unimportant. Sulu would miss it, though. He and Chekov had worked together for a long time and Sulu would feel the Russian's absence keenly. In fact, he missed him already, and wondered where Chekov had disappeared to so quickly.

Sulu did what he had to do. He reported Chekov's defection to the Coordinator.



Dr. McCoy's problem was inactivity. Once he had made his daily visit to Kirk's cell, there was little else for him to do. He spent time on the Fabrini research, and though at one time this had been at the core of his life and work, his concern for Kirk and his own feelings of inadequacy concerning his part in the rescue provided too much over which to brood. He would really be of use until later, when Spock's plan was nearly an accomplished fact.

McCoy didn't know what the others were doing. Spock had given each of them taped instructions and his own part was easy — McCoy would visit Jim every day, administering small doses of the Fabrini drug so that it would build up in his body, causing increasing irritiability and loss of mental faculties. That condidion could be remedied with one shot of Masiform-D, although it would take longer for Kirk's system to be totally drug-free. The beauty of the compound was that it couldn't be detected and Kirk's mental and emotional deterioration would appear genuine. That was absolutely essential to Spock's plan. Kirk was suffering some natural depression, enhanced and magnified by McCoy's potion.

Now all McCoy could do was to slip Kirk the daily dose while not getting caught, and watch his friend apparently grow steadily more unbalanced. Not a pleasant activity, even knowing the cause. McCoy paced his apartment, wishing for a little Saurian brandy to ease the passage of time. But he didn't know when Spock woul call upon him to play the next scene in the drama. McCoy couldn't risk not being able to do his part. Too much was riding on the outcome.



Uhura crimped the last connection, thankfully removing the magnifying lenses she wore over her

eyes. The absurdly small yet delicate device would dangle quite charmingly on a bracelet or as an earring — she wasn't sure just how she would use the twisted filigree design. Perhaps an earring — she had a reputation for wearing them even while in uniform — the more elaborate the better. She considered the small, acorn shape in her hand, then set it aside. With her stylus she quickly sketched an elaborately detailed setting, the acorn making up the center, with more filigree swirled around it. She would have to make a second one, of course, or perhaps she could wear an ornate headscarf which left only one ear visible. She immediately discarded the idea. She might have to be in uniform for her part of the mission, and headscarfs were definitely not "uniform of the day."

Mr. Spock would be pleased with her handiwork, if he were anything other than a Vulcan. Uhura tossed the very valuable construct into her jewelry box before changing into her jogging clothes. She would make a duplicate tomorrow. Just now, she had a date with her shadow. She might even stop for a drink with him later. Or, perhaps invite him back to the rondaval. It was a pleasant thought. He was a most delicious man.



Scott climbed over every inch of the <u>Maid of Mystique</u>. "Maid of Misery's more like it," he told an equally dirty and disheveled Sulu. "And misery is what she'll give ye!" He wiped dirty hands on an already filthy rag, looking at Sulu's dejected face. "But--" Sulu's face brightened immediately, "it'll be close, lad, and we might not make it, but--" he looked around the dingy engine room one more time, "we might be able to make her into something."

Sulu grinned from ear to ear. "I knew it couldn't be as bad as you mumbled back there," he said, pointing to the jeffrey's tube. "I'll admit, it's a bit dirty, though."

"Aye, lad, and that's our first task." Scott looked around again in disgust. "I canna work in an engine room covered with filth. Ye canna even read the instruments." To demonstrate, Scott rubbed a finger over one of the indicator boards, removing a layer of accumulated grit, then wiped his hand on the rag he still carried. "Working with engines has never been what you would call a clean occupation, but there's no call for mess like this."

Scott stood, shaking his head at the condition of the engine room, and then led Sulu through the small companionway to the bridge. "I suppose the bridge is in no better condition."

"It's a bit cleaner."

You can be a starship captain."

"That's not saying much."

"I've checked out the helm and navigation consoles and did a once-over on the communications board," Sulu said as they entered the miniscule center. "As far as I can tell, they're in slightly better shape than the engines. Could use a coat of paint, though."

"Time enough for that when we're safely away, lad. Our first priority is to fix the engines up without letting on just how much fixing's going on." His gaze travelled around the bridge. "But, we can't
have the admiral commanding in a place like this -- a coat of paint would be in order if we have the
time. I doubt Mr. Spock would set foot on this bridge the shape it's in." Scott paused, then asked,
"Have you thought about a name? You'll have to register her."

"Aye, Scotty," sulu replied with a grin. "I think I'll call her <u>Pseudolous</u>, for she's not what she appears."

"She's even worse!" Scott declared while looking around the cramped quarters, eyes settling on the empty navigation station. "You're certain about Chekov?" he asked grimly.

Sulu nodded, and then told Scott about their last conversation.

"And you've no idea where he's gone?"

"None. I don't even understand why. He knew the risks we were taking when we went to Genesis. He was willing, even eager to go. Said loyalty to friends was an old Russian tradition. Now?" Sulu shook his head sadly. "I just don't know."

"Well, the lad's always had a good head on his shoulders, so perhaps he'll come around yet. There's always a chance."



At that moment, Chekov was seated in a bar with a member of Starfleet security, untouched drinks on the table before them.

"I vill not spy on my friends," Chekov said firmly. "I do not know vhy you think that I vould."
"We know you and Sulu had ... words ... about Kirk. We know there's a plan to break him out of
jail. We know you said you wouldn't go along with it. Help us and you can have your career back.

"And what kind of a crew would trust a captain who betrayed his friends?" Chekov asked. "Personally, I vould find that hard to do."

"You'd be doing your duty as a Starfleet officer, upholding the laws of the Federation, as you agreed when you took your oath. It is the others who have betrayed you, did you ever think of that? You merely followed the orders of people who have outranked you all your career, whose orders you were accustomed to carrying out -- and one of them was a well-known, much-decorated admiral. They had never led you wrong before. Until this time. No one will blame you."

"You seem to forget that I am already convicted and sentenced. And, an experienced officer should know when he is being 'led astray', as you put it," Chekov countered. "Anyvay, I vas guilty and said so. I vill not, however, compound the offense by betraying my friends."

"A command?" Chekov slowly repeated the words. He looked up into the face of the agent. "How is that possible?"

"We take care of those who help us — it's an old story. You help us, we help you. You want a command, you got a command." The agent had found the chink in Chekov's armour and was pressing the attack. "Of course, I can't promise you a starship, but a smaller ship would be quite feasible."

The security agent rose and handed Chekov a card. "If you change your mind, get in touch. You won't regret it, I guarantee."

Former Commander Pavel Chekov watched the agent leave. Childhood dreams of command were vividly recalled and rekindled. Spock and the others were going to break the law again. Chekov would only be doing his sworn duty to try to stop them. And the dream of command, a command he had worked toward for years and then thought was lost, was once again within his grasp. He wondered just how long it would take Lieutenant Russell to return to his office.



Scott and Sulu had the ship ready, with belated help from Chekov, who had returned expressing regret at his defection and ruefully pleading temporary insanity. Spock had found the code combinations which unlocked doors and cancelled security alerts — without tripping any of the security blocks built into the codes. Lieutenant Saavik arrived at headquarters and told to report in the morning to the Chief of Security for assignment within the hospital area.

All was in readiness. Now all awaited the word.



Uhura was awakened by the pulsing of the subdermal transponder in her forearm. She slipped from the bed, her shadow hardly stirring as she moved. But in case he was awake and carefully concealing the fact, Uhura took a small hypnospray (courtesy of Dr. McCoy) from its hiding place and quickly injected the sleeping agent with enough tranquilizer to keep him out of action until mid-day. To throw him off the scent even more, she left a note saying she had gone to town for some breakfast fruit and propped it up on the kitchen table.

After taking her very special earrings from the jewelry box and fastening them quickly in her ears, she moved softly to the bed and stood for a moment watching the sleeping man. "Goodbye, sugar," she whispered, kissing her fingertips and placing them softly on his lips. "I hope you don't get in too much trouble over this. You really are a most delicious man."

Another moment and she turned away, quietly leaving the Rondaval and walking quickly down the jungle path toward her rendezvous point.

The word had been given.



Chekov whispered earnestly with his contact. "I've got to be qvick. I think they might suspect me. They're starting one of their diversions. Uhura has slipped away from the agent assigned to her and is heading here. They vant you to think that they're going to make an attempt now, so you'll move the admiral to the prison planet sooner than planned. They'll use a cloaking device Scott and Spock have put together to get close to the transfer ship, board her, and take the admiral." Chekov stopped to catch his breath, "You'll get my commission back? I'll get a command?"

"Of course, of course," the agent replied distractedly. "What's your place in this?"

"For the diversion, I drive the air car, the getavay car, as they used to call it. For the real attempt, I'm part of the boarding party."

"And the others?"

"I do not know Ve only know as much as ve need to."

"They don't trust each other?" the security agent said eagerly. Perhaps this was another entry into the ranks of the conspirators.

"No, it is precisely because they do trust each other that they would consent to such a situation. Spock vanted everything that happened to appear real -- all the reactions -- to throw off your surveil-lance teams."

"We were not deceived," the agent assured him.

"I have to go. I told Sulu I was going to check the air car one last time."

"If we arrest several members of the group today, what will the others do?"

"They vill keep trying, but the next time they vill not only go after the admiral, but whoever else you put in detention. They von't stop until all are free or all under arrest."

"Your information will prove very helpful. Keep in touch," the agent commanded as he melted into the night.

"So you sold us out after all, lad." The voice came out of the darkness.

Chekov whirled around to face the advancing Scott and Sulu, both of whom held phasers leveled at his midsection.

"! dinna think ye'd do it lad, but I was wrong. I just hope ye haven't compromised our plans too much."

"Why, Pavel, why?" Sulu asked, not understanding that the Russian was only doing what he felt he must.

Chekov launched himself at Sulu, certain that Sulu would hesitate before firing precisely because it was Chekov who was attacking. He guessed correctly, and the two of them went down in a heap. Scott stood by, looking for an opening when a voice called out of the darkness, "Hey, you there!" accompanied by the sound of running feet.

Scott didn't bother to waste time looking in the direction of the voice. He held his phaser by the business end and, identifying Chekov's head in the darkness, brought the butt of his weapon down on the back of Chekov's skull, then pulled Sulu to his feet. The two of them ran from the area, darting between buildings, into an alley, and finally down another street, running until the sound of footsteps died behind them.



Consciousness returned to Pavel Chekov in a haze of pain. He was propped up in the security agent's car, slumped against the door.

"I think they're on to me," he commented ruefully, holding his head and wondering if it just wouldn't have been easier to stay unconscious, certainly it would have been less painful.

The agent laughed and agreed. "I think you're right. How's the head?"

"I could use a new one."

"I don't doubt that for a second."

They rode in silence, Chekov paying only cursory attention to their route.

"Do you think they'll change their plans now that they know you're working with us?"

Chekov didn't answer at once, considering the probable action of the conspirators. "No, but ve von't know which of the plans they decide to put into effect. Ve'll have to take our chances."

"We'll be ready for them, whatever they try."



James Kirk lay on the narrow bunk of his cell, contemplating the wall. Not cell, he reminded himself, detention area. But cell it was, just the same; the decor had not changed substantially in hundreds of years. He could just as well be in the 18th century as the 23rd — the only differences were the metal walls and the force field barrier which guarded the opening, rather than the most traditional steel bars.

Not that Jim Kirk cared much about anything. The drugs that McCoy kept administering slowed down his metabolism and sapped energy levels. His speech tended to slur and his thoughts were often muddled. He briefly wondered why McCoy was doing this, suspecting that it was part of some insane attempt to spring him, if that was the phrase, from jail. He had tried to stop McCoy from doing whatever it was he was doing, but McCoy had just waved the words away and Kirk hadn't pressed the issue.

There was movement at the force field.

"Jim?"

McCoy, of course, probably bringing more of his poisons.

"Go away."

"Now is that any way to talk to your friendly family doctor?"

Kirk heard the warble of McCoy's medscan as it passed over him. The doctor made appropriate clucking noises, turned Kirk over, and studied the slack face and the vacant eyes. There was the slight pressure against his harm -- McCoy pumping more drugs into him -- which was Jim Kirk's last rational moment.



Montgomery Scott gave one final simulation to the ship's engines. They would run rough, but but they would perform as required — for a while. He wiped his hands on a rag, then transferred control to the bridge station and made his way there.

Only Sulu's legs were visible under the helm console, where he was making final adjustments to the circuits. His head connected unexpectedly with a projection and he muttered appropriate oaths. "This bridge could use more space."

"Then, lad, it would require a larger crew. And two is the best we can do at the moment."

"Scotty, if we ever get enough money for a refit, I demand more room under the helm console."

"I think you'll just have to learn to live with the cramped quarters. Refits are expensive and we've no fleet to pay for it."

"In that case, I'll survive," Sulu surrendered with a faint grin.

Scott sat at the navigation console, flicking switches, watching telltales as they brightened into existence. "You've filed a flight plan?" he asked, not for the first time.

"The Pseudolus... Captain Sulu in command ... leaves tonight on a trading trip to the outer planets, on impulse power only. A nice, slow trip across the planetary system, in a small ship which requires a rather small crew. As copilot, I recruited a former shipmate, since my original partner had backed out at the last minute. Flight plan approved -- with a 'good luck to you, Mr. Sulu, on your new venture'. All signed, sealed, and delivered."

"Aye, and let's hope it stays that way," Scott prayed.



Captain Spock arrived at the detention center shortly after the lunch hour. He was allowed to enter the security area following a perfunctory personal search. He found Kirk hallucinating — he was aboard the Enterprise again .. in command ... his future before him ... his life entwined with that of his ship ... actually believing himself to be the ship.

Spock called the guard. It did not take a trained observer to detect Kirk's mental aberration. The guard sent for the doctor. After a quick examination, a transfer was requested to the security wing of the Headquarters hospital, as Kirk was too ill to be treated in the small prison facility.

Permission was long in coming, and night had fallen before the transfer was successfully completed. Command was rejuctant to allow Kirk out of maximum security, even a deranged Kirk, in light of Chekov's revelations. Spock was not allowed to stay with the patient, but had insisted that McCoy, as Kirk's own physician, familiar with his medical history, be called.

No attempt was made to rescue Kirk on the way to the hospital, although Security had been prepared to deal with any emergency. A hospital security officer admitted the patient and attendant medical staff, while several security guards solemnly took their positions outside the hospital room.

When McCoy rushed in several minutes later and was admitted with only the briefest search, he could have sworn the guard on duty winked at him, but of course that was impossible -- Vulcan-Romulan hybrids never wink.

McCoy came into the room where several doctors were bending over the unconscious Kirk. The indicator panel over the bed showed Kirk's life signs in the lower ranges. The drug was acting perfectly, and McCoy hoped the antidote he carried with him worked as quickly and as efficiently as predicted.

"Ah, Dr. McCoy," Dr. Everston greeted him. "You are familiar with the patient, are you not?"

Of course 1 am you fool, McCoy thought. Haven't we discussed the case every day for the last

week? Out loud, he merely agreed and then brought out his own medscanner, moving it carefully over
the still body.

"You've given him a sedative?" he asked, knowing full well that they had not. Kirk's present condition precluded any such treatment.

When they shook their head, he asked, "How long has he been like this?"

"He was discovered shortly after noon, raving about being part of his ship, then lapsed into this coma."

"He hasn't been himself," McCoy offered. "It could be the body's reaction to his mental state."

The other doctors looked at each other in some disbelief. They had certainly expected a more learned opinion from the patient's own physician, whose reputation as a diagnostician was wide-spread. But here he was sounding like some pre-med student. The senior physician led the group towards the door; when McCoy looked in their direction, he led them into the corridor, making certain the door closed behind them.

With a muttered, "'Bout time," McCoy took out his hypospray with its precious vial of serum. It was the work of a minute to inject Kirk and several minutes wait for the chemical reactions to begin neutralizing the drug and restoring Kirk's consciousness and sanity. McCoy only hoped that Kirk would be reasonably alert when he awakened. The doctor wasn't all that certain he could manhandle his fellow physicians and shepherd Kirk at the same time. Indeed, he rather needed help to manhandle the physicians.

Kirk was just stirring as the other doctors returned. McCoy guessed he was about to be taken off the case, but a movement from the bed diverted their attention and McCoy stepped back to allow the others to pass, casually turning away and reaching into his little black bag to remove a concealed weapon.

The other doctors, concentrating on the patient's unexpected return to consciousness, grouped around the bed.

"Jim, you okay?" McCoy asked from across the room.

There was an answering grunt.

"Then I think it's time we got out of here, don't you?"

The doctors around the bed turned to meet McCoy's phaser leveled at them. There was another grunt from the patient, who swung his feet to the floor and pushed himself up, swaying unsteadily.

One of the younger doctors exhibited signs of being a hero, but McCoy waved him back towards the bed. "One move and I'll stun you all," he told them. "I may do it anyway."

Kirk was rapidly regaining his senses as well as mobility, moving away from the doctors and towards McCoy.

"Ready to travel, Jim?"

The only reply was a weak grin, and McCoy, his phaser on stun, fired at the doctors still clustered around the bed. They fell in a heap, some across the bed, some on the floor.

"A mighty impressive pile of medical knowledge," McCoy observed. "Trade clothes with one of them. The disguise is as old as Methuselah, but still works if no one's expecting it."

With some assistance from McCoy, Kirk did as he was told, finally joining the doctor at the door. McCoy motioned Kirk behind him with the fleeting idea that things should be the other way around --- it should be Kirk who held the phaser, who should be taking the lead in the melodrama and not himself.

Jim Kirk agreed with him. His mind was becoming rapidly clearer and he now wanted to know the plan and his part in it. "What next, Doctor?" he asked. "You're not attempting this alone, are you?"

McCoy slipped the phaser back into his pocket. "Now we just walk out of here. Almost forgot," he said as he went into the little black bag one more time, bringing out a small tape player which he set down near the bed. It produced a mumble of half-heard voices. "Just in case somebody gets curious."

"How did they let you in here with all that stuff?" Kirk asked, amazed at the contents of McCoy's little black bag.

"Familiarity," was the quick reply. "Now just nod as i'm talking to you, and keep your dead down. There's a friend or two nearby, but mostly we're on our own."

"Lead on, MacDuff," Kirk urged and gestured toward the door.

"That's 'McCoy'!" was the quick response.

Kirk grinned as the two of them slipped quietly into the hallway, McCoy talking "medicalese" and Kirk nodding pontifically while casting a surrepticious glance at the guard at the door, who winked at him.

Vulcan-Romulan hybrids don't wink, Kirk thought.

They almost made it to the outside door — they were that close when the alarms started ringing and all hell broke loose in the hospital. The red shirt brigade was everywhere. Kirk and McCoy turned to look in the direction everyone was running, as innocent bystanders usually do, and then continued walking right towards the guard who stood at the front doors, which were now closed and probably secured. Others trying to leave the building were being turned back and Kirk had little hope that they could

somehow talk their way out.

They had McCoy's phaser, but the odds were decidedly unequal. Kirk felt a phaser jammed into his back and a low voice urging him ahead.

"You too, Dr. McCoy. But first, I'll take that little black bag of yours," the voice growled.

McCoy sighed and turned, apparently to hand the bag to their captor. Just as his swing was beginning to gain momentum, he put a sharp brake on his arm, recognizing the security officer who had made the sucessful capture.

"Of course, Lieutenant," he said in a slow drawl. "It's nice to be caught by a friend, rather than an enemy. Sort of keeps it in the family and all that sort of thing."

"Straight ahead," the lieutenant snapped. "We've a vehicle waiting for you."

She motioned towards the door. "After you, Doctor, Admiral."

They did as ordered, stopping at the guard station just inside the entrance. The lieutenant commander on duty recognized their captor.

"Good work, Saavik. They never had a chance. I'll take over now."

"My orders are to take them out to the security van, so that they may be taken back to maximum security detention."

The sentry looked out the window at the vehicle parked in front, a full commander standing at the door.

"Would you ask the commander to help me escort the prisoners to the van?" Saavik asked. The officer nodded and deactivated the security lock. The van officer was called over, and after showing his credentials, took custody of the prisoners. He and Saavik marched them out to the aircair with the assistance of the door sentry and saw them securely locked inside the rear compartment. The proper documents were signed and initialed and the aircar was free to leave. The vehicle had just passed through the gates when the alarms sounded again, and the door sentry realized he had been tricked — he could probably say goodbye to his rank, if not his career.

"Mind telling me where we're going?" Kirk asked, testing the handcuffs linked about his wrists. "Somehow this just doesn't seem like much of an escape. If it wasn't for Saavik and Chekov up front, l'd think I was on my way back to jail."

"That's probably where we'll end up. When I saw Chekov — well — I thought we'd have more chance with three against one than back there at the hospital."

"What's that supposed to mean?" Kirk demanded. "That crack about Chekov."

"Just that he's sold us to the Feds for a mess of braid and a command," McCoy responded sourly. ,
"I don't believe that!"

"Neither did we, be he was caught in the act by Sulu and Scotty."

"Well, I still don't believe it -- not for a moment -- not the Chekov I know."

"But he's not the Chekov you know, Jim. He took it all very hard. He really wanted to be a captain .... Of course, so did several others I could name."

The van came to a stop before Kirk could reply. There were sounds outside and then the back door of the van opened to a darkness only slightly less intense than inside the vehicle. There was little time to notice surroundings as a transporter beam silently engulfed two figures. Kirk's last thought was that he wished he knew where he was going, as he heard a muttered oath from McCoy.

They were in the Klingon Bird of Prey. Kirk should have realized it -- Klingon transporters were soundless, unlike those of the Federation, which hummed rather raucously in comparison.

Spock was there, unlocking the handcuffs and shepherding Kirk and McCoy down a corridor.

"We must hurry, Jim, Doctor. We are to rendezvous shortly with the Pseudolus."

Spock was heading for the bridge, if Kirk remembered the layout of the ship correctly. "What's the Pseudolus?" he asked.

"Mr. Sulu's ship. Mr. Scott is on board her as well."

"What happened to Chekov and Saavik?" Kirk asked. There seemed to be far more questions than he had time to ask.

"They have stayed behind as decoys, and to hide the van."

Kirk gave McCoy an "I told you so" look at Spock's implied confirmation of Chekov's loyalty.

"And just what did Chekov think he was doing acting that way?" McCoy demanded as they arrived at the cramped bridge area?"

"Following orders, Doctor," was the calm reply.

"Well, then, would somebody tell me what's going on?" McCoy pleaded. "I only know the plan up to and including the hospital room. I've been improvising since then."

"I shall explain it all as soon as possible. If you, Jim, will take the navigator's seat,"

Spock gestured to one of the stations, "I'll handle the helm. I have programmed the computer with Federation Basic to simplify the ship's handling. The course is already laid in and the cloaking device is now engaged."

"And the others?" Kirk asked. Spock would not leave the rest of the crew behind to feel the wrath of Starfleet.

"Pseudolus will pick them up. He computer is locked on to their interdermal transponders, sending out a coded signal, just as this ship's computer was tracking Dr. McCoy."

"But won't Starfleet Communications pick up the transmissions?" Kirk asked.

"Unless there are very recent advances in technology of which I am not aware, they have not been able to track either the transmissions or the transporter beam which brought you to this ship."

"Been messing around with Starfleet's computer again, eh, Spock?" McCoy asked innocently. His question was answered with one raised eyebrow.

"I'd be interested in hearing just how you got your hands on this ship," Kirk remarked. "When you've time, of course," he added hastily.

"Of course, Jim, when there is time."

And, Kirk told himself, neither McCoy nor i will get anything further out of him until then.

"In that case, I suggest we get this show on the road.



Sulu eased the helm control forward, the old ship shuddering as she waddled out of space dock and stumbled her way into orbit like the tired old lady she was. Scott shook his head at the engine's grunts and groans, uttering Gaelic curses at the antiquated propulsion system.

"You said she'd be rough, Scotty," Sulu reminded him as he fought to fine tune the orbit he had coaxed the elderly ship into.

"Aye, I've over-estimated her capability, though. I doubt she'll take us far."

"This is not the time to tell me that," Sulu complained.

"Just as long as we can get her out of orbit on her way to the Jovian moons, she'll be doing her part," Scott declared.



Uhura materialized in a darkened storeroom at the Fleet com center, thankful that Klingon transporters operated silently. Just how, she wondered, had Spock managed to disengage the security screen surrounding this building? Let him keep his secrets, she decided, and she would keep hers. She'd soon have them wondering how she managed to turn Starfleet communications into a mad jumble of words, sounds, squeaks and blips. She'd made a deal with Spock — his secret for hers.

Uhura slipped out of the storeroom and into a brightly lit corridor. Spock had provided her with valid Starfleet ID, but unless he had managed to foil the security computer into disregarding the sudden presence of an additional person in the building, her efforts would be useless. Then she remembered that this was Spock — who knew more about computers than all of Starfleet. He had probably initially programmed these computers, and in a flash of Vulcan precognition, had left himself this one small escape hatch. Spock had told her that the computer would ignore her presence and so it would. No computer would dare contradict Mr. Spock.

She walked purposefully down the corridor, to all appearances an officer intent upon her duties. Uhura knew the building well, as she had attended training sessions here and had recently spent a tour of duty in the administration office — a job she had detested, but which now proved invaluable for her current assignment.

The central computer room was just ahead, and inside it was the master universal translator. More Vulcan magic breached the security lock and Uhura was safely inside with the door closed and locked behind her. She slipped off the earring, detaching the device she had so carefully crafted. It was the work of but a minute to open the proper unit and insert her handlwork into the mechanism. When activated, Starfleet communications would be translated into gibberish just long enough to allow them to escape from the planetary system into free space. Fleet communications couldn't be out of commission too long — she wouldn't want the Klingons or the Romulans to get any ideas. All that remained was to safely exit the building.

Uhura slipped out of the room, activating the security lock as she did so, and walked purposefully down the corridor towards the main entrance and freedom.

She hugged the building shadows, seeking the safety of darkness. Street traffic was light with

few pedestrians about. In less than an hour's time, the area would pulse with Fleet personnel reporting for their shift, and after a slight lull, the now off-duty personnel would depart, each to his or her own pursuits. It was all too quiet, Uhura thought. Alarms should have been ringing in half a dozen places and spotlights tracing arcs across the grounds and buildings as swarms of security personnel searched for the intruder. There was a trap here. The only question was where and when it would spring and who it would catch.

A ground car glided to a stop, a door swished open; Uhura slipped in, and the vehicle sped away.

"Chekov!" Uhura blurted out upon finding him sitting in the front passenger seat. "Now I know
why I suspected a trap. How did you get back into the picture?"

"I am innocent, Uhura. Trust me." The Russian accent was more pronounced than usual.

"He's a spy, Saavik," she told the driver. "I got in and out too easily. This has to be a set up."

"Agreed," Saavik replied. "He showed up just as I was about to come here and I thought it best to
bring him with me. That way we'll know just what he's doing."

Uhura drew her phaser. "Don't move a muscle, Pavel. Don't take a chance that I won't pull the trigger. I won't enjoy doing it, but I will if I have to."

"Really, Uhura, I'm not a spy. I just look like one. That's what Spock wanted."

"You're not that good an actor," she told him. "You'd never be able to carry it off with Sulu and Scotty. Just take it easy and you can come along for the ride. Act up, and we'll dump you here."

Chekov slumped down in the seat. "I'm doing as you say. I von't make a suspicious move, not even an unsuspicious one. Believe me, I have no vish to be left behind."

"Saavik, how soon before we get where we're going?"

"Twenty point five minutes, if we are not pursued."

"Suppose we take a detour, go a roundabout way. Anyone waiting for us would think that we weren't coming, or that their information was inaccurate. They might split their forces, send some of them out to look for us. That would make the odds more in our favor."

"But even so, we would still be outnumbered."

"Ve do not have fime for sightseeing!" Chekov declared. "There is to be no reception committee vaiting and if we do not make that rendezvous--"

"Mister," Uhura told him, "you had just better keep quiet or we'll dump you. Is that clear? Just nod, no more talking."

Glumly, Chekov did as he was ordered. They wouldn't listen. He could hardly blame them, as his actions recently had not been those of a friend. Uhura wouldn't even let him move from his slumped positon. He hoped that with all the extra travel they wouldn't be too late. Timing was everyting from now on.

Saavik took the next corner on two wheels, the car virtually perpendicular. "Tell me how you fixed communications," she requested.

"Later. Wouldn't want the opposition to know what we're about ... Saavik, just where did you learn to drive like that?"

Saavik didn't answer, glancing briefly at Chekov. "I just can't accept the fact that he's not one of us."

"But I am," Chekov mumbled, conscious of Uhura's phaser pointed at him. "Von't you believe me?"
"No!"

The air car raced silently through randomly selected streets until Saavik decided it was time to head for the pickup point. With a nod from Uhura, she turned off the glideway onto a secondary road that would take them out of the city proper, but away from the more travelled route.

Chekov grunted approval at this change of direction. "That's more like it," he said under his breath . "As long as they don't leave me somewhere along the side of the road."

With the city behind them, Saavik stopped the aircar at the edge of the road as it skirted along a sheer cliff high above one of the city's famous hills.

"That's not going to fool them for a second," Uhura pointed out as she guessed at Saavik's intention to send the car over the cliff. "That idea is even older than the hill we're standing on."

"But it may just slow them down enough--"

"Immediately after it's brought the authorities here on the run?"

"It would be better," Chekov suggested, " to hide the air car among the bushes so that it von't attract undue attention, or you might fiddle a bit with the innards and make it look as if someone abandoned it when it broke down."

Uhura agreed with Chekov's suggestion, but she wished it had come from someone else. "We'll hide

it in the bushes. The owner might appreciate getting his air car back in one piece." They might be car theives, but they were not vandals.

"Whatever you say, Commander," Saavik agree. "I'll put it over there."

Parking the car was easy; obliterating its tracks was more difficult, especially while trying to keep an eye on Chekov, who was doing most of the work.

"Now, move over there," Uhura directed him when the car was safely hidden. "We don't need your company any longer this evening."

"You're not going to leave me behind," Chekov pleaded. "Uhura, you can't do this to me."

"I can and I am." She motioned with her phaser, and a reluctant Chekov moved away from the two women. He watched silently as Uhura removed a communicator from her belt, flipped it open, and said, "Go."

Just as the transporter beam began to glow, Chekov threw himself at the women -- when the dematerialization glow evaporated, the road was empty save for the hidden air car and the lights of the approaching police vehicles.



Aboard the Klingon vessel, preparations were also underway for a transporter operation.

"Are you locked onto the bridge of the Pseudolus, Spock?"

"Affirmative, Admiral. There are five life forms."

"Don't you think we can dispense with the 'Admiral'," Kirk suggested. "Seems to me there was some kind of legal hocus pocus regarding that particular title."

"Perhaps 'Captain' would be better, as you are the captain of this vessel, such as it is."

"And perhaps we could just make it Jim," Kirk replied, amused by Spock's insistence on the formalities of the bridge.

This was greeted with one raised Vulcan eyebrow. Kirk smiled broadly. It had been a long time since he had seen that particular Vulcan expression. "Now we wait for their signal," Kirk said, as his fingers began to drum characteristically on the arm of the command chair.



Aboard the <u>Pseudolus</u>, Scott and Sulu looked at Chekov with disgust. "I thought you were going to leave him behind with his friends," Scott said. "There's no place for him among us."

"I didn't bring him; he brought himself by jumping into the beam just as we were transporting."

"You can trust me," Chekov protested. "Contact Mr. Spock and he'll confirm what I say."

"And have all of Starfleet down on us? That stupid we're not, lad. That's just what you want us to do, and then you'll have that command you're so anxious to get."

"I gave up all thought of command when I agreed to go to Genesis. You know that. We all knew what we were doing," Chekov declared.

"But some of us remembered where our loyalties lie, and some of us forgot once the going got a little rough," Scott reminded him.

"I did not turn traitor."

"Well, it certainly appeared that way," Sulu cut in. "Your actions were hardly those of a friend. You were more concerned about your own problems than you were about the admiral. All you could think about was the command you'd never have and how bored you were on the planetary run. Well, I was bored too, but I didn't decided to throw in with Starfleet and toss friendship to the wind. You could have done the same."

"No, I couldn't. My orders were different. And, I didn't throw away any friendships."

"That's enough, the two of you." Scott came between the belligerants as Sulu took a decidedly offensive stance. "Only man who can solve this is Spock. I'd like to believe you were with us, Chekov, but--"

"Spock will confirm my orders," Chekov interrupted eagerly. "Just ask him."

"And to do that we'll have to take you with us and that just might be another trap." Chekov remained silent but hopeful. "But I gues it's a chance we'll have to take." Scott turned of Sulu, who had already taken the helmsman's position, with Saavik beside him at navigation. "Take us out of orbit, but casually. Even though we've got clearance, we want to ease our way, at least for the moment. Uhura, when do you activate that little beastie you've created?"

"Just before we make contact with the Bird of Prey. And wait till you see what it does to communications for a while." She smiled at the thought, wondering how long it would take the wizards at Fleetcom to decipher the gibberish.

Scott pulled out a communicator and said, "Go plus four." Then to Uhura, "Interrupt communications in three minutes, fifty-five seconds." Uhura triggered the automatic timer built into her earring device, while Sulu and Saavik began setting automatic controls which would maintain <a href="Pseudolus">Pseudolus</a> course and speed.

Scott looked with renewed distaste around the cramped and dingy bridge. "And glad I'll be to be abandoning this bucket of bolts."

Sulu, aggrieved by Scott's condemnation of the ship, protested, "With a little work, it could have been--"

"Never!"

"But--"

"Laddie, there was no way. Now let's get out of here. You, Chekov — don't try anything. My phaser will be right in the middle of your back. And remember, you're surrounded by the best in Starfleet — or the best that was Starfleet — and there's nothing we don't know about diversions."

"I vill do nothing, believe me. I'm as anxious as you are to depart this qvadrant," Chekov assured him.



Aboard the invisible Klingon scout vessel, Spock made ready to disengage the cloaking device and simultaneously engage the transporter as the chronometer clicked off the last seconds. His own tampering with Starfleet security controls had included instructions to erase the programming from the computer's memory. Hence the need for this particular operation to bring the rest of the team on board.

As the counter reached zero and the vessel became visible, five bodies materialized in the miniscule transporter room where Spock manned the controls.

"Welcome aboard the Kobayashi Maru. If you will come forward, the captain and Dr. McCoy are on the bridge."

They moved forward as one, Scott still holding the phaser on Chekov.

"That will not be necessary, Mr. Scott," Spock told him. "Mr. Chekov is one of us."

"You see, I can be trusted," the Russian said triumphantly.

"Never doubted it for a moment," Sulu declared, clapping him on the back.

"You never doubted? You were the first to believe the vorst!"

"But I was supposed to believe the worst," Sulu countered.

"Ve vill never settle this argument."

"At least," Spock interrupted, "you will not settle it here." He led the way into the corridor.

The bridge was the scene of a joyful but restrained reunion between Kirk and the members of his crew he hadn't seen since his arrest several months ago. The reunion was interrupted by the shimmer of a transporter beam beginning to coalesce into a single figure in the uniform of a Starfleet admiral.

"Harry Morrow!" Kirk whispered. This close to escape and they were caught. And by the Commander of Starfleet himself. Out loud he said, "To what do we owe the honor of this visit? Perhaps you've come to wish us well?"

"in a way, Jim, you're correct." Morrow looked around the small bridge at the former officers who once made up the pride of the fleet. "We knew your loyalty to your crew, Jim, and their loyalty to you. What we didn't count on was their loyalty to each other, or perhaps things would have been ... handled differently. You've cost us a great deal of money, as well as Security's reputation."

"Perhaps you could send us a bill?"

"This is not a time for sarcasm, Jim."

"Then suppose you tell me why you're here, and how you got here. Obviously our plan wasn't as successful as we thought."

"On the contrary -- at this moment, Starfleet Security is turning itself inside out following the other ship."

Morrow turned toward Uhura. "I hope that whatever you've done to communications won't last too long. I'd hate for our friends, the Klingons and the Romulans, to guess that we have a problem in that area."

"They won't have a chance, sir," Uhura assured him.

Spock came forward. "Jim, listen to the admiral. I believe you'll find what he has to say interesting."

"So that's why it was so easy," Uhura observed. "That's how I got in and out without detection."
"Not at all," Morrow told her. "I did nothing to assist your mission. I may have made things
a triffle easier by scheduling a staff meeting for that evening, but that shouldn't have affected

security procedures if they were as tight as we believed. Obviously, changes are necessary. You would still have gotten away."

Kirk, with one eye on the chronometer, interrupted. "What do you want, Harry? We haven't got time to sit here and exchange sea stories. And you didn't drop in to wish us god-speed."

"Correct as usual, Jim. I'm here to make a proposal to you — a chance to serve the Federation while remaining outside the law. The whole galaxy knows your situation. By this time tomorrow, wanted posters will be circulating on all of you. The news services will be running stories about your escape and I'll be in front of the cameras urging the citizenry to report anything they might know to the authorities. Any shred of sympathy remaining with the public will be gone. You'll be on the run with the entire Federation at your heels.

"You'll be forced to go where the Federation and Starfleet have little influence — those parts of the galaxy frequented by others such as yourselves. And it is here that you can be an enormous advantage to us. You'll be in the unique position of establishing liaison with individuals who have no reason to like Starfleet or the Federation, and to report back what you learn."

"In other words, Harry, you want us to be spies," Kirk said.

"I think you understand the situation quite perfectly, Jim. We could, of course, have let you all off with a reprimand. You actually did us a few favors on the trip to Genesis. But quite frankly, it was too good a chance to pass up. A discredited Starfleet admiral and his equally discredited command crew which would be out where they can do us an enormous amount of good."

Kirk was out of his chair, advancing on the commander, face grim. "You put me through a living hell just so that you could—"

"Jim!" Spock was next to him, taking his arm, holding him back. "Don't! There is no way public opinion would have allowed Starfleet to act other than they have. You know that."

Kirk listened to Spock's words and allowed himself to be restrained. He found that he could not so easily forgive or forget. "I don't know, Harry. I can't make this kind of decision for the others. And if I had to make it for myself at this moment, the answer would be 'no'."

"I don't need an immediate response," Morrow replied. "The holiday season is coming up. If I receive a greeting card signed by my old pal, Jim, then I'll know that you've accepted my offer. If, however, my old pal Jim just signs his name, then I'll know it's no go." Morrow pulled out a communicator and handed it to Kirk. "It's the latest we have. Its range is as great as that of the subspace radio on this ship, but it is linked to my office. You'll report directly to me, if you decide to accept. If not, I think I can rely on you to destroy it."

Kirk nodded as he accepted the device. "Either way, this will be safe," he assured Morrow.

"Begging the admiral's pardon," Spock interrupted with all the military courtesy at his command,
"but if we are to make good our escape, we must leave this area very shortly. Your communications
will be coming back on line within a very few minutes."

Morrow nodded. "I don't want to do anything further to jeopardize your escape." He turned and looked at each of them in turn. "I know this is asking a great deal, especially after what we did to you. But you're our best, and we need our best on our front lines — out there where the law is honored in the breach more than in the spirit. We don't often have an opportunity to have our best out there." He turned, walked back to where Kirk stood, and held out his hand.

Kirk looked at that hand for a moment, then slowly, almost reluctantly, extended his own and solemnly shook hands with the Commander of Starfleet.

With a final nod at the others, Morrow moved away, took out another communicator. He flipped it open, spoke softly into it, and was gone in a shimmer of light.

It was Kirk who broke the ensuing silence. "Engage that cloaking device and get us the hell out of here --- they'll be on our tails in a moment."

With practiced ease they went to their stations. Kirk took the center chair and with Sulu at the helm and Chekov at navigation, the Klingon ship moved into the heavily travelled space lanes to the outer planets at maximum impulse power. Once beyond the planetary system, their ion trail well mixed with the plethora of trails in the area, they would make good their escape.

And then what? Morrow's offer or --? Kirk didn't know, hadn't had time to think along those lines. McCoy's drugs were still in his body -- would be for days. Even though he could function reasonably well, he didn't yet have the sharp edge needed for this situation. That would come, but at this moment Kirk felt exhausted. He slumped in his seat, eyes almost closed. McCoy was instantly at his side, running a medscan over him, the others casting concerned glances in Kirk's direction.

"That's all for you today, Jim," McCoy ordered. "You need to get some rest. Haven't done much besides lay around lately, and it will take a while to get your stamina back. You're not as young

as you used to be, either."

"Thanks for reminding me; I never would have known," Kirk replied. "And there are a few others I could name for whom time hasn't exactly stood still."

"Touche! BUt you'd better get some rest. I'll lay out an exercise and diet program, and you'll be fit in no time."

"Thank you, Doctor. Out of one prison and into another."

"Ah," came the slow drawl, "but this time you have a more sympathetic jailer."

Spock stepped into the discussion, effectively halting debate, and ordered Kirk to his quarters.

"Wherever they are," Kirk muttered. "And I thought I was the captain."

"You are captain, Captain," Spock agreed, "but since the ship became the property of my family when it was on Vulcan ...." Spock didn't finish the sentence, but his meaning was all too clear.

"And just how did Sarek manage that?" Kirk asked, intrigued that Spock's father could keep such a prize out of Starfleet's hands.

"My father did not say, but he is not without influence in the Federation."

"I see you haven't lost your knack for Vulcan understatement, Mr. Spock."

McCoy took Kirk's arm and pulled him from the center seat. "Come on, Jim, I've inveigled the captain's quarters for you, despite Spock's claim of ownership. You two can flip a coin or draw a card or something to determine rank. But not now."

Spock eased his way into the center chair as McCoy led Kirk from the bridge, but Kirk turned back before leaving to speak of his crew.

"I never said thank you. It seems so ... inadequate for what you've done. All I can say is that you have my eternal gratitude. Thank you for your sacrifice and for your loyalty. I'll do my best to keep earning it."

But before finally leaving, Kirk had one more observation. "And just as soon as we can manage it, let's redecorate this place. Klingon taste is depressing." He paused, anticipating the future, "I'd very much like a piece of Captain Styles, a very large piece of Captain Styles."

"Aye, Scott agreed. "I'd kinda like a piece of him myself."



Several days passed before the crew discussed Morrow's offer. There wasn't a great deal of room in the Klingon ship, and with such a small crew there was little time for much besides sleeping and standing watch. Kirk had taken over full command once McCoy's prescription had begun to take effect. He felt good — for the first time in months — and the future, though hazardous, was again beckoning with life and adventure and excitement.

They were all gathered on the bridge, the only place they could assemble, as the bridge stations had to be manned at all times. Spock and Scott were working on that problem, but it would take a while. The Klingons didn't include ship's schematics in their computers, an omission which necessitated tracing each and every wire and connection. Even McCoy had been recruited to help with the project, once he had determined the needs of the small and very ill-equipped sickbay.

"We still have to consider Morrow's offer," Kirk began. "You all know the advantages and disadvantages, but I'll list them one more time so that we all know exactly what's involved. First, if we accept, we'll be back in the Fleet, but with a considerable difference. If we are caught at anything, we'll be considered spies by the opposition and criminals by our own people. We won't have the weight of official authority behind us. We will also be fair game for any Starfleet officer who wants a piece of glory and reward money. There would be the chance that escape might be made easier the next time, but there's a limit to how many times you can escape from Starfleet jails without someone getting a bit suspicious."

"If I were just anybody," Sulu remarked, "I'd be pretty suspicious of our recent success."

"! agree," Uhura jumped in. "! thought so at the time I was in the Comm Center. ! should have been caught, and I wasn't."

"There's even more to consider. We won't be masters of our own fates — we'll have to go where sent, and you can be certain that our destinations will be the most undesirable possible. But we're going to need a larger crew, and we can get them from Starfleet, and won't have to worry about whether or not they'll stab us in the back one night while we sleep. There would also be easier access to supplies and replacement parts, and a source of money, which is in short supply at the moment."

"And if we don't accept?" Scott prompted.

"Pretty much the same, but without the frosting. We'd still be fair game for anyone wishing to

collect the reward, but we would have independence of action. We'd be able to keep any money we earned in the cargo business — where I suggest we at least start, as that will give us an opportunity to go more or less where we want without raising too many questions — rather than turn it in or have it deducted from the budget."

"There doesn't seem to be too much difference -- not really," Chekov commented. He looked around at the others. "At least as far as I can see. The risks are certainly the same."

"It would seem to boil down to a matter of loyalties," McCoy added, "and whether we have any left to Starfleet or not."

"That's about it, Bones," Kirk admitted.

"And how do you feel about it, Jim?" Spock asked. "Could you go back and become a part of the chain of command again, putting aside what has happened?"

Kirk did not answer at once. His eyes were focused beyond the hull of the ship, on other walls even more confining. "It wouldn't be easy," he finally admitted. "Those months were a waking nightmare I didn't believe I'd ever emerge from. It was like ... like spiralling down a dark hole which only got darker and darker and I was moving faster and faster—" He squeezed his eyes closed at the image, while the others looked away, slightly embarrassed at Kirk's own vision of hell.

"That was the drug, Jim," McCoy reminded him.

"I know; but it was real, and I wouldn't have been there if Harry Morrow had given me the Enterprise."

"Jim," McCoy cautioned, "that's like saying none of this would have happened if you hand't revived Khan when we found the <u>Botany Bay</u> floating in space. It's useless to think along those lines. We, none of us, can disregard what has happened. We can only go forward from this point, accepting what has happened and not letting it affect the 'inner us' more than we can help."

"It isn't that easy."

"Of course it isn't. Life doesn't come with that kind of guarantee."

"it is not easy, even for a Vulcan," Spock admitted.

"Who now has even more Human emotions to deal with than before," McCoy suggested gleefully. "I know I'm more logical."

"That can only be an improvement," Spock responded.

Kirk smiled at the interplay — the first since they boarded the ship. Perhaps they could once more regain that unique working relationship that had so distinguished this group of people. It had surfaced again when Kirk and proposed stealing the <u>Enterprise</u> and going to the Genesis planet, and again in their rescue of Kirk from jail, but could it be rekindled on a permanent basis? They had, all of them, travelled different roads since the days of the five-year mission, and McCoy and Spock had shared an experience that defied understanding. Kirk didn't know — but they were together in this, which ever way they turned, whichever decision they made.

"Captain." It was Uhura. "You make the decision about Starfleet. No matter what happens, you'll be making the decisions — that's what a captain does. I'll do what you say, whatever it is."

"I can't make decisions for you which affect your life," Kirk protested.

"Yhy ever not?" Chekov asked. "You've been doing it for years."

Kirk grinned ruefully. "Yes, Mr. Chekov, but then it was my job. Now?" Kirk shrugged, holding his hands palm up, as if to say that he could only make decisions for himself these days.

"I agree with Uhura," Sulu joined in. "No matter what you say, you're going to be the primary target, not us. We're the small fry. Either way, it's you they'll be after. Besides," he added, "as you once said, a ship is not a democracy — more like a benevolent dictatorship."

"I don't remember ever saying anything like that," Kirk replied. "Scotty, care to join the discussion?"

"No, Captain. ! think the others have said it all."

"Doctor?"

"I'm a doctor, not a toastmaster!"

"Mr. Saavik. You're just starting out; we've all been around a while. In many ways, you have the most of lose by all this -- however it goes."

"It is not logical to assume that Starfleet would welcome me back. Also, one of the first things I had to do when I met Captain Spock was to learn to trust. This is perhaps an excellent time to put that into practice, Admiral."

Kirk winced slightly at the title, but turned to where Spock was seated on the side. "Spock?" "It is not a decision I would wish to make, Captain. The logical course of action may not be the best one in this circumstance."

McCoy stood there, grinning and rocking back and forth a little on his feet. "Well, I never thought I'd live to see the day when you would admit that logic couldn't be relied upon to make decisions."

"That is not what I said, Doctor. But Jim, if you are to be the captain of this vessel, then you must make the decisions regarding the ship and its crew. We leave it up to you."

"You're no longer in Starfleet. When we all signed up, we agreed to take the orders of our super-iors. We are no longer held by that oath."

"But in coming on this ship, in doing what we did," Spock argued, "we took another implied oath, and in so doing we put our lives once more in your hands. It is your decision, Jim. You have to make it. We will do whatever you think best."

Kirk sat silently looking at the viewscreen and the starfield projected there. He knew that the decision had already been made. That, in effect, each of them had made their own decision and trusted that he would make the same one.

He sat still so long that Chekov decided to prod him a bit.

"If you please, Captain, I should be in bed now, and I vould vish to know whether I'm back on Starfleet's payroll or not, and if so, what rank. I personally will settle for nothing less than a captaincy."

"Either way, there is only one captain on this ship, mister."

"Of course, Captain. I vouldn't have it any other vay."

"There is really only one choice. Old loyalties die hard, especially those of a lifetime. Uhura, do you have that radio Morrow left behind?"

Uhura smiled as she handed him the small communicator. "Affirmative, Captain, and I have a list of supplies and equipment I should like to have available, and some suggestions on crew additions."

"And I, also, Captain," Spock added.

"And there's some medical equipment I need. The Klingons don't seem to care one way or the other whether injured crewmembers survive."

"If you'll all give me your requirements, I'll put forward a requisition and hope for the best. Perhaps we could trade the information about how you subverted Starfleet communications, Uhura, in exchange for some goodies. Just how did you do it, anyway?"

Uhura smiled reminiscently. "I merely programmed the universal translator to convert everything into Swahili — backwards — and put a timer in. It's still sitting there waiting to be reactivated any time you wish, Captain."

Kirk grinned. "Very neat, Commander, very neat. Useful at the time and useful now. Perhaps we should hold the information for a while to see how helpful Command is going to be," Kirk mused. "A little blackmail, just for practice, of course. We should practice the skills we'll be using in our new professions, don't you agree, Mr. Spock?"

"Indeed, Captain," Spock answered on cue, but Kirk doubted the Vulcan would ever make a very good pirate.

"Does anyone have anything else to say?" Kirk asked. When no one spoke, he added, "Then I think Mr. Chekov can go get his beauty sleep, and the rest of you scatter."

Sulu, Saavik, and Uhura, all on duty, stayed where they were; the others made their way off the bridge.

Uhura was humming softly at the communications console.

"Why so happy, Uhura?" Kirk asked.

"Just think, Captain, since we won't be official Starfleet, I can wear any earrings I want and won't worry about getting called down for being out of uniform."

"Did that ever bother you before?" Kirk asked, intrigued at the possibility.

Uhura smiled at him, "Not really, Captain Sugar, but I never knew what visiting commodores or admirals would say."

"And I didn't even realize--"

"Oh, yes, you did, Captain," Uhura interrupted him. "Don't you remember when you first came on board, you hinted at it very carefully and I just as carefully ignored it. We got along fine from then on."

"I don't remember that," Kirk protested.

"That's as it should be," she assured him.

"Mr. Sulu, how far are we from the nearest safe anchorage?"

"At our current speed, we can make safe orbit in two point eight days."

"Lay in the course, Mr. Sulu. I need to pick up a greeting card for a friend."

"Aye, aye, Captain."

And the former Klingon scout, soon to be under Starfleet orders, made her way to her first port of call under her new command — a planet of thieves and pirates and the less desirable members of the Federation. A place where the ship and her crew of mutineers would be welcome, and her captain looked upon as something of a hero for making Starfleet look bad. Kirk leaned back in his chair, crossed his legs, and enjoyed just being alive and free and in command of a ship. And the future was not such a terrible place in which to live, after all.

Captain's Log, Stardate 5420.6. On course for Cartagena, a pirate planet. Have requested supplies and additional crew members from Starfleet. Awaiting confirmation of resupply point as well as further orders. Kirk out.



## Phantasma

## by Rosemarie Eierman

The first mention came from Doctor Carol Marcus. After completing her lengthy report detailing the closing of Regula I station, she was asked if she had anything else to report. She said no. But there had been a note of hesitancy in her voice which prompted the debriefer to question further. "I'm not sure," she replied. "I had something really strange happen to me my last night there. It was probably just a case of melancholia. I couldn't sleep, so I was in our recreation room, not doing anything, just gazing out the viewing port at Regula, wishing things had turned out better. Then something made me look at the stars instead and — just for a moment — I could have sworn I saw a starship. It didn'thave much substance; it was ... how I've imagined a ghost must look. And then it wasn't there any more." When asked what kind of ship it was, she answered sadly, "It looked like the Enterprise." The debriefer dismissed her story as the result of fatigue and grief.

Some weeks later the manager of Space Station K-7 indicated in his report that several of the trading vessels passing through reported sighting a ship resembling a Starfleet heavy cruiser. She answered no hail but always their ship's sensors detected her sensors fully operating. The report was routinely acknowledged and ignored.

But then Starbase 11 reported strange "blips" on their sensors, the kind of blips a heavy cruiser would make, but sometimes it happened when no large ships at all were in the area. An engineer was sent to check the equipment.

A scout ship passed Delta Omicron system and paused to take detailed readings of Berthold radiation output. It also sighted a silver ship orbiting the third planet, a vessel that disappeared as the scout approached. But it had come close enough to read her number, NCC-1701. As that scout ship was headed out on a mission and carried a fresh, experienced crew, the report could not be summarily dismissed.

Neither could that of an independent scout vessel crewed by Vulcans near Zeta Bootis. Nor those of six different scientific vessels from four planets. Nor all of the fifty-seven reports made by merchanteers, supply vessels and colony ships on the fringes of Federation space.

Then came the report from a Klingon delegate at Babel. And another from a Romulan refugee a quadrant away. It was impossible, of course, and yet it seemed to be true: three full years after her destruction at Genesis, Enterprise, without a scar or blemish, whether gleaming silver against the black of space or washed gold by a sun's bright light, was out there where she had long been, carrying out her mission, continuing to explore the vast wonders of the universe. She was, it seemed, a ship that would not die. Or, perhaps, dying had set her free — free of admirals and ambassadors, of commodores and cadets, of ensigns and engineers, free of Starfleet orders and acts of nature, free to voyage where she wished and when, and to think whatever thoughts a legend thinks. But she was seen most often near her old haunts, as if she were looking for something or someone.

Robert Morrow, Commander, Starfleet, threw the report on the table and sighed. It was days like this that he fervently wished a board of inquiry had never ordered James T. Kirk and Company aboard that captured bird of prey and deep into Klingon territory. Phantom ships, like Vulcan mysticism, had to be taken on faith. He much preferred more solid things, things like Enterprise II, to which he would give a send-off in a few hours.

Morrow walked over to the port of his office. It was dark outside except for the lights of the starbase around him — and the stars. Unknowingly, he smiled a crooked smile. For all the inherent problems, it was somehow comforting to know that, out there somewhere, the Enterprise still rode the winds of space, watching, seeking, searching for her captain and crew. Loyalty such as that ....

Something caught his eye, off near the curve of Earth, over where the new ship rested in her dry-dock. He blinked and it vanished. No. No, it was still there, he thought, but he had spent too little

time in space to be certain it was by the drydock and not nearer or further. The harder he tried to see the harder it was to see until he could see nothing at all except Earth, the stars and the spidery web of the drydock itself. Had it been the old <a href="Enterprise">Enterprise</a>, come to check out her namesake? He sighed; he would probably never have an answer.

Instead of leaving the report where it lay on his desk, Morrow picked it up, smoothed it down and carefully put it away. With one last speculative gaze out the port, he turned off the lights and left the room.

